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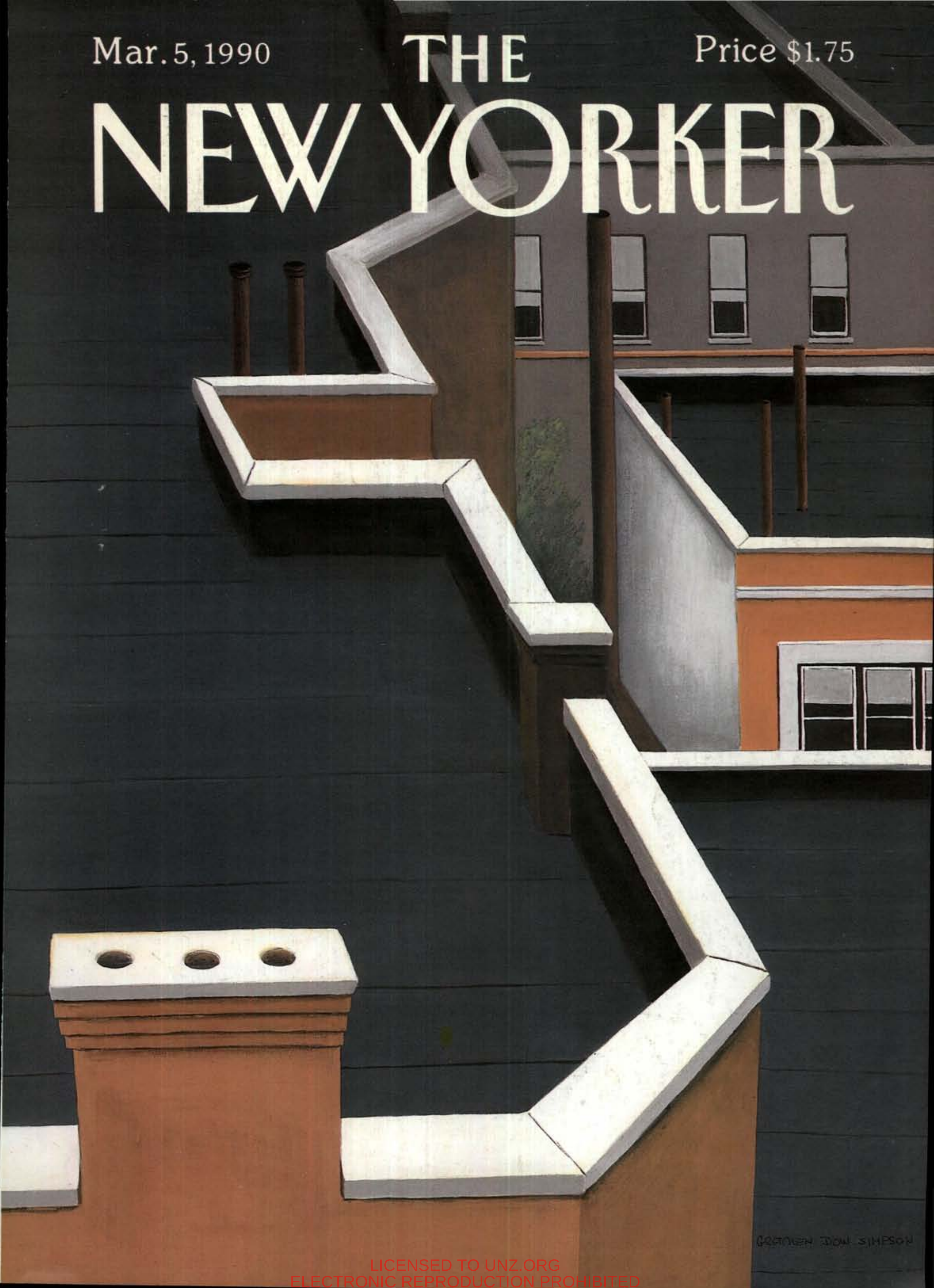
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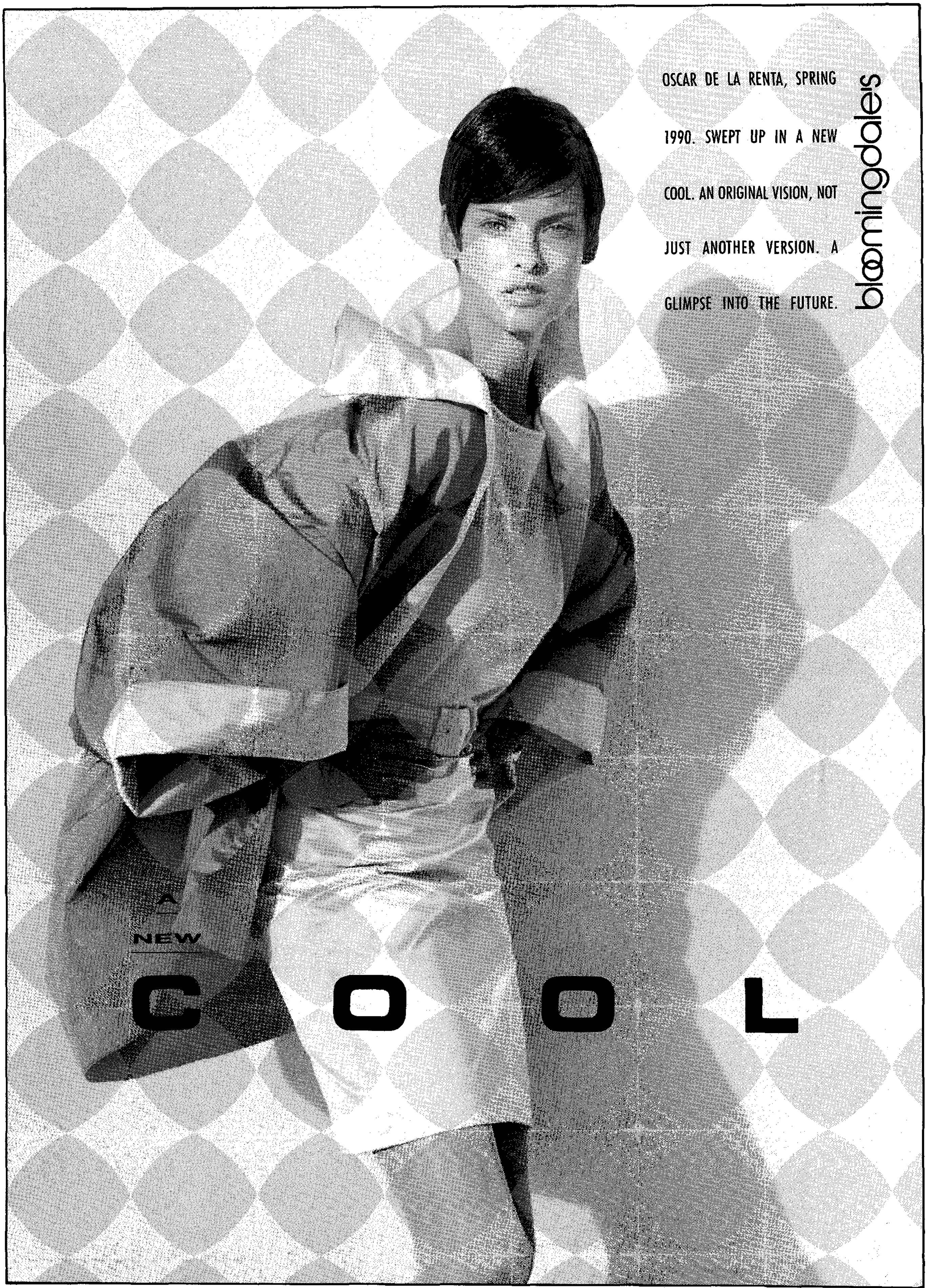
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

MARCH 5, 1990

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 4
THE TALK OF THE TOWN 31
"LONESOME SHORTY" . . . . *Garrison Keillor* 36
"KAT" . . . . *Margaret Atwood* 38
"IN MEMORY OF MY FATHER: AUSTRALIA" (POEM) . . . . *Joseph Brodsky* 40
THE ART WORLD ("THE POLISH RIDER") . . . . *Anthony Bailey* 45
"FINGERNAILS" (POEM) . . . . *Eric Ormsby* 46
MUSICAL EVENTS . . . . *Andrew Porter* 78
THE THEATRE . . . . *Mimi Kramer* 89
LETTER FROM LONDON . . . . *Julian Barnes* 91
"KEY" (POEM) . . . . *Revan Schendler* 96
BOOKS . . . . *Lis Harris* 101
BRIEFLY NOTED 106

COVER: *Gretchen Dow Simpson*

DRAWINGS: *Joseph Farris, Glen Baxter, Warren Miller, Peter Steiner, Charles Barsotti, Jack Ziegler, Ed Fisher, Henry Martin, John O'Brien, Danny Shanahan, Edward Frascino, Robert Weber, Bernard Schoenbaum, Michael Maslin, William Hamilton, Gahan Wilson, Lee Lorenz, Mort Gerberg, Leo Cullum, J. B. Handelsman*

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

According to the people who run the New Theatre of Brooklyn ("Deborah J. Pope & Steve Stettler, Artistic Directors"), the best way of getting there from Manhattan is to take the No. 2 or 3 train on the Seventh Avenue I.R.T. and get off at Bergen Street. From there, it's a one-block walk to 465 Dean Street, a few steps in from Flatbush Avenue (turn right at the Mobil station). Of course, you can just as easily take the D train to Atlantic. The D crosses the Manhattan Bridge in the open air, bringing you in over that breathtaking view of the Brooklyn Bridge and New York Harbor. From Atlantic, it's one stop on the I.R.T. to Bergen (see above), or, alternatively, a three-block walk up Flatbush to Dean Street (turn left at the Mobil station).

Just now, Mr. Stettler's tight little production of Tom Stoppard's "Rough Crossing" is the main reason for heading out that way. "Rough Crossing" was the 1984 Stoppard play that never made it to New York because it flopped at the National in London. It's a freely adapted version of Ferenc Molnár's farce "The Play at the Castle," best known to Americans (courtesy of P. G. Wodehouse) as the 1926 "The Play's the Thing." Stoppard's piece is a verbal farce—the laughter resides in questions of when things get said and how they can be misunderstood, rather than in when people show up and whom they can be mistaken for—which is as good a reason as any to worry about how a production of the play would fare in any of the five boroughs. But accents and style, we've come to learn, are not something you need to worry about at T.N.T. The casting and direction are irreproachable, and there's none of that business of having to filter out this or that weak performance. Instead, you constantly change your mind about who the most winning actor is, and find yourself bestowing the honor on whoever holds center stage at the moment.

You can make the trip to T.N.T. after dark, going straight to the theatre: the lights along the harbor are pretty enough. Or you can set out early with a view to grabbing a bite at one of the restaurants up by Grand Army Plaza and walking back, in which case you'll probably catch a moment or two of the day dying out along the water and the stonework glistering on the Brooklyn Bridge and find yourself thinking of Hart Crane. ("And Thee, across the harbor, silver-paced/ As though the sun took step of thee . . .")

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Bad Habits—A revival of two 1973 one-acts by Terrence McNally. Nathan Lane, Kate Nelligan, and Faith Prince are in the cast. Directed by Paul Benedict. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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Debby Boone in "The Sound of Music"

By and for Havel—Two one-act plays: **AUDIENCE,** by Václav Havel, and **CATASTROPHE,** Beckett's 1982 drama dedicated to Havel. Kevin O'Connor and Lou Brockway are in both works, directed by Vasek Simek. In previews. (John Houseman Studio Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

Circle Repertory Company—Presenting **PRELUDE TO A KISS,** a new comedy by Craig Lucas. Alec Baldwin, Barnard Hughes, and Mary-Louise Parker are in the cast, which was directed by Norman René. In previews. (Circle Repertory Company Theatre, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

Making Movies—A new comedy by Aaron Sorkin, the author of "A Few Good Men." With Michael Countryman and David Marshall Grant. Previews begin March 1. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 246-0102.)

The Sound of Music—Debby Boone is Maria in the New York City Opera's production of the Rodgers and Hammerstein classic. Also with Werner Klemperer and Laurence Guittard. Previews begin March 2. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

NEW THIS SEASON

Away Alone—No one could accuse Janet Noble's sweet, feckless comedy about young Irish immigrants in the Bronx of being overly sophisticated. The play is innocent, sentimental, and old-fashioned—a little like the characters it portrays—but the feeling it creates in the audience becomes infectious, a little like the laughter it inspires. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

The Circle—Rex Harrison, Glynis Johns, Stewart Granger, and an able supporting company have raised Somerset Maugham to the heights of Sheridan and Congreve. The play is about an elderly couple who pay a visit to the wife's middle-aged son, whom she deserted thirty years before. Brian Murray directed the fine production. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/4/89.) (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

City of Angels—Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; James Naughton and Gregg Edelman, leading men; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in absolutely top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The plot concerns the making of a private-eye movie (and the unmaking of its author). The spectacular settings and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. (12/25/89) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Closer than Ever—This charmer amounts to an anthology of songs and sketches by Richard Maltby, Jr. (words), and David Shire (music), as sung and performed by Brent Barrett, Sally Mayers, Richard Muenz, and Lynne Wintersteller. They are a gifted quartet, and lucky to have such attractive, humorous, and tender songs to sing and words to speak. The fact that there is no amplification is an extra boon. (11/13/89) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde—Another example of the current literary and dramatic vogue for recasting the strange case, this time by Georg Osterman. The production has the Ridiculous Theatrical Company's usual vices (excessive length, scattershot antics) and virtues (clever sets, animated performances by, among others, Everett Quinton and Eureka). (Charles Ludlam Theatre, One Sheridan Square. 691-2271. Closes March 11.)

Dylan Thomas: Return Journey—The Welsh actor Bob Kingdom stands shoulder to shoulder with Emlyn Williams and Alec Guinness, who have also played Thomas, in this performance of excerpts from the prose and poetry, both public and private, of the late Mr. T. It may strike some members of the audience that the passages from the short stories, reminiscences, and letters have more feeling and humor—even beauty—than the verse. (Hudson Guild Theatre, 441 W. 26th St. 760-9810. Closes March 18.)

A Few Good Men—"Mister Roberts" meets "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Aaron Sorkin's military-courtroom drama treats issues such as justice, honor, loyalty, and morality with the slick, facile smugness of a half-hour comedy series, but most of the performances, by an ace cast under Don Scardino's direction, are wonderful. (11/27/89) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Grand Hotel—The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (11/27/89) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.)

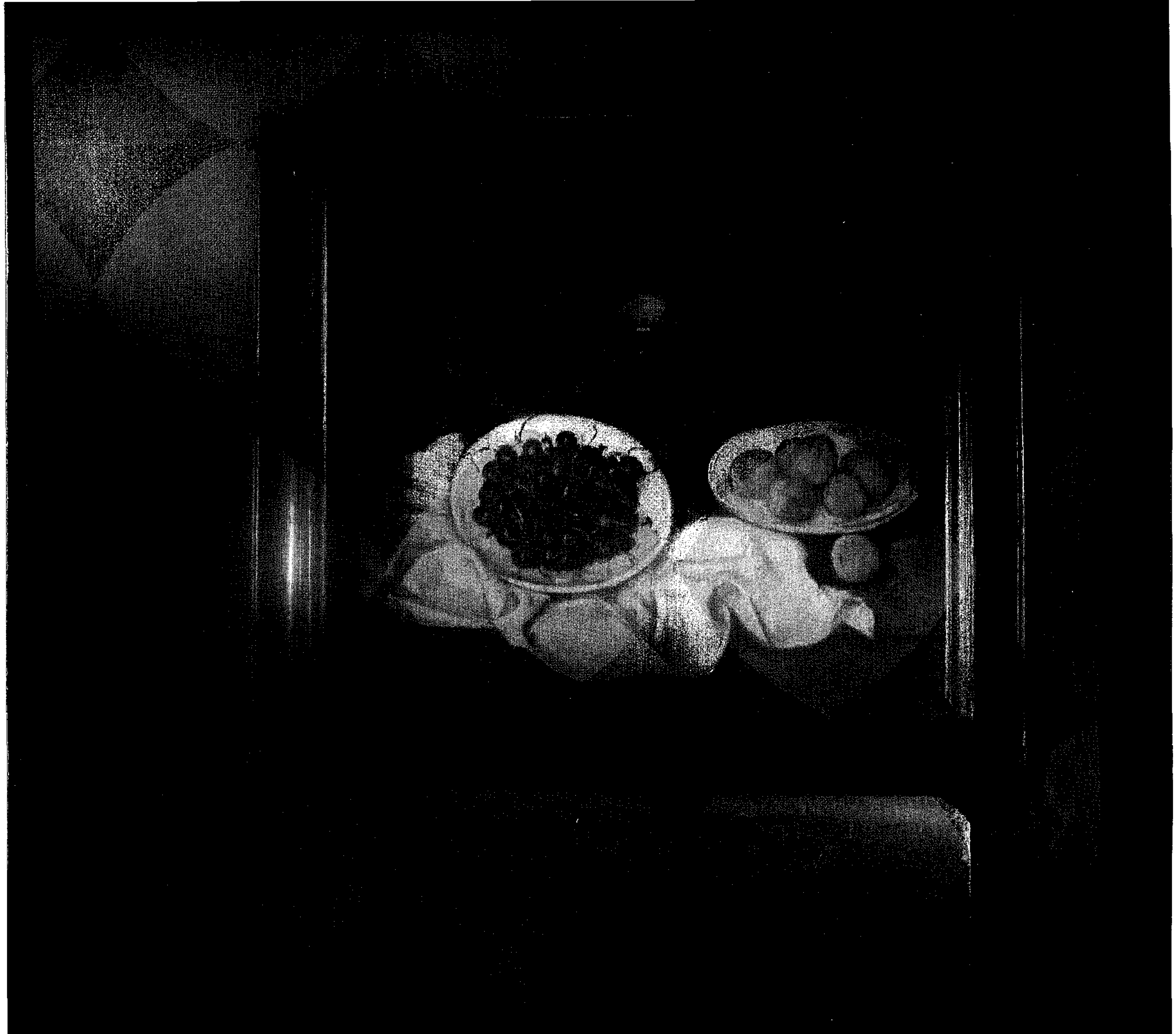
Gypsy—This revival of the great Sondheim-Styne-Laurents-Robbins musical (directed by Arthur Laurents himself) is so delightful—and the cast (led by Tyne Daly, Crista Moore, and Jonathan Hadary) so engaging—that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). Trust Broadway; you'll have ample time to welcome Miss Daly when she mounts the steps and delivers her first onstage line. (12/4/89) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

Juan Darién—A revival of a 1988 Music-Theatre Group production, performed by a company of actors, dancers, musicians, and puppeteers. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200. Closes March 3.)

Manhattan Punch Line—Presenting the annual festival of new one-act comedies. Evening A: "Philip Glass Buys a Loaf of Bread," by David Ives; "Portfolio," by Tom Donaghy; "The Show Must Go On," by Laurence Klavan; and "How Are Things in Costa del Fuego?," by Rick Louis. . . . ¶ Evening B: "The Fertilization Opera," by Peter Tolan; "Grunions," by Barbara Lindsay; "Brunch at Trudy and Paul's," by Michael Aschner; "Fellow Travellers," by Jeffrey Hatcher; and "The Artistic Direction," by Roger Hedden. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes March 4.)

Meet Me in St. Louis—If you like the old M-G-M musical, you probably won't like this stage version, which combines the earnest, wholesome values of the movie with an aesthetic of surpassing vulgarity. In any case, why see the show when you can rent the movie? (11/20/89) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.)

The Merchant of Venice—This production, directed by Peter Hall, tries a little too hard to avoid anti-Semitism (by making Christians look awful) and seems more interested in the quality of male bonding than that of mercy.



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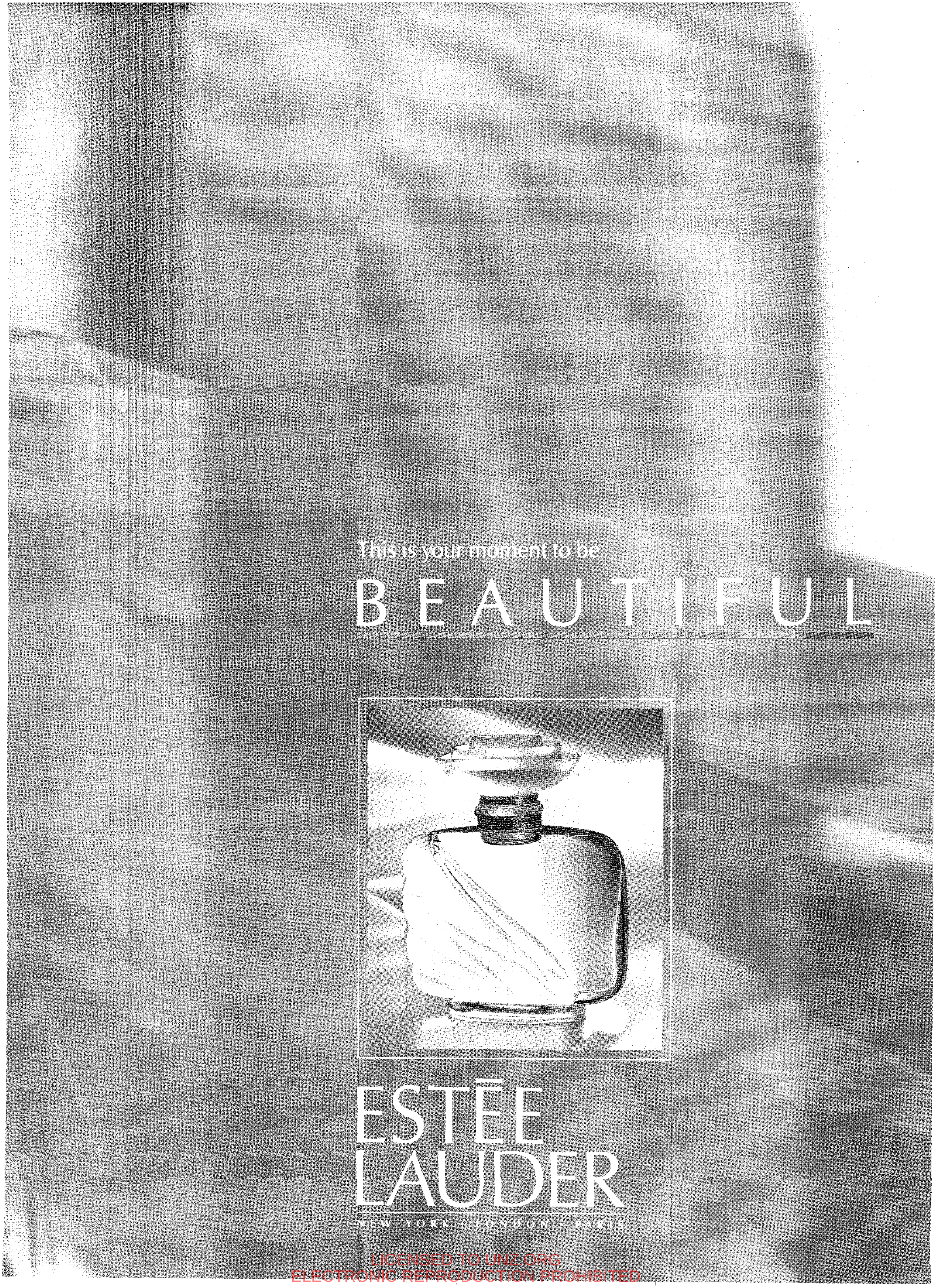
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THE THEATRE—Cont'd

As Shylock, Dustin Hoffman is dignified but ultimately ineffective. Fortunately, the production is about great ensemble Shakespeare rather than about Hoffman's Shylock, and it would be worth seeing if only for Michael Siberry (Gratiano) and Geraldine James (Portia). (1/9/90) (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-0102. Closes March 10.)

Negro Ensemble Company—Presenting **burner's frolic**, by Charles Fuller. With Adam Wade and Charles Weldon. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-8545. Closes March 18.)

Rough Crossing—The New York première of a comedy by Tom Stoppard. (The New Theatre of Brooklyn, 465 Dean St. 1-718 230-3366. Closes March 19.)

Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll—All manner of hypocrites, fakes, liars, and other ethical discards are subjected to Eric Bogosian's incomparable mimicry and wit. The evening is anything but depressing. (2/26/90) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Some Americans Abroad—Yank Anglophilia and self-hatred among a group of academics on their department's annual theatre tour of England. The play, by Richard Nelson, would be worth seeing if only for the quality and style of performances—particularly from Colin Stinton and Henderson Forsythe. As it is, you could do a lot worse than this well-observed and amusing comedy of manners. (So, as the record shows, could the playwright.) (2/26/90) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Square One—Richard Thomas and Dianne Wiest in a new, two-character play by Steve Tesich. Directed by Jerry Zaks. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

Tru—Robert Morse gives a deeply thought-out, accomplished performance as Truman Capote—by turns funny, bitchy, ironic, and rueful—at the end of his life and his tether. The play was written and directed by Jay Presson Allen. (1/1/90) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

When She Danced—"She" is Isadora Duncan in this sad-edged comedy, by Martin Sherman, which is set in Paris in 1923, when Isadora's career has come to a close, although she doesn't know it. She is surrounded by her crazy Russian husband and an international bevy of servitors and admirers; the polyglot dialogue is one of the better jokes. Elizabeth Ashley appears in the leading role, and she is admirably supported by, among others, Marcia Jean Kurtz, Jonathan Walker, Robert Sean Leonard, and Marcia Lewis. Tim Luscombe was the impeccable director. (2/26/90) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Zora Neale Hurston—This show by Laurence Holder, with Elizabeth Van Dyke as the novelist, is more an infusion of information than a play, but the information about the Harlem renaissance and the men and women who were its instigators is always interesting, and so is Miss Van Dyke. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074. Closes March 4.)

LONG RUNS

black and blue: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, Bunny Briggs, Jimmy Slyde, and a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **cats:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **a chorus line:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **driving miss daisy:** Frances Sternhagen and Arthur French star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038) . . . **the fantasticks:** The longest-running long run turns thirty this year. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **forbidden broadway 1990:** A source of continual merriment, this recently updated revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **the heidi chronicles:** Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With Brooke Adams. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **jerome robbins' broadway:** A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **the kathy and mo show: parallel lives:** Comedy skits and vignettes about gender and its role in society, written and performed by Kathy Najimy and Mo Gaffney. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.) . . . **lend me a tenor:** The setting of this farce by Ken Ludwig is a hotel suite in Cleveland in 1934, where a famous tenor who is booked to sing "Otello" takes an overdose of barbiturates. A substitute must be found. Under Jerry Zaks' direction, all the surprises up the dramatist's sleeve are brought to comic life. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **les misérables:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **other people's money:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **the phantom of the opera:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

PLANT LIFE

Robert Irwin, the artist famed for his spare, enigmatic environments, has given New York City a weird new piece of public art. At the back of an office-tower atrium on 45th Street, between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, he has built a wall of trees. They're all red cedars, about twenty feet tall, and they're stacked in five rows of four within a huge steel grid. Like the sheer fabrics and chain-link fences Irwin often uses, the grid transforms the landscape while partially concealing it; the ratty brick walls of the nearby Belasco Theatre, visible between trunks, have never looked better.

The piece is not quite finished. It's not yet lit the way Irwin wants; there's too much glare coming off the columns. Also, the two lower tiers of trees died a few months ago. The developer replaced one row with specimens that are too small, and gave the other a thick coat of blue-green paint. Colorful banners have been hung temporarily behind the trees, blotting out the Belasco completely, a practice Irwin calls "embarrassing." Still, this work remains both startling and hilarious. The last thing you expect to find on 45th Street is neat suburban strips of evergreens growing a hundred feet in the air.

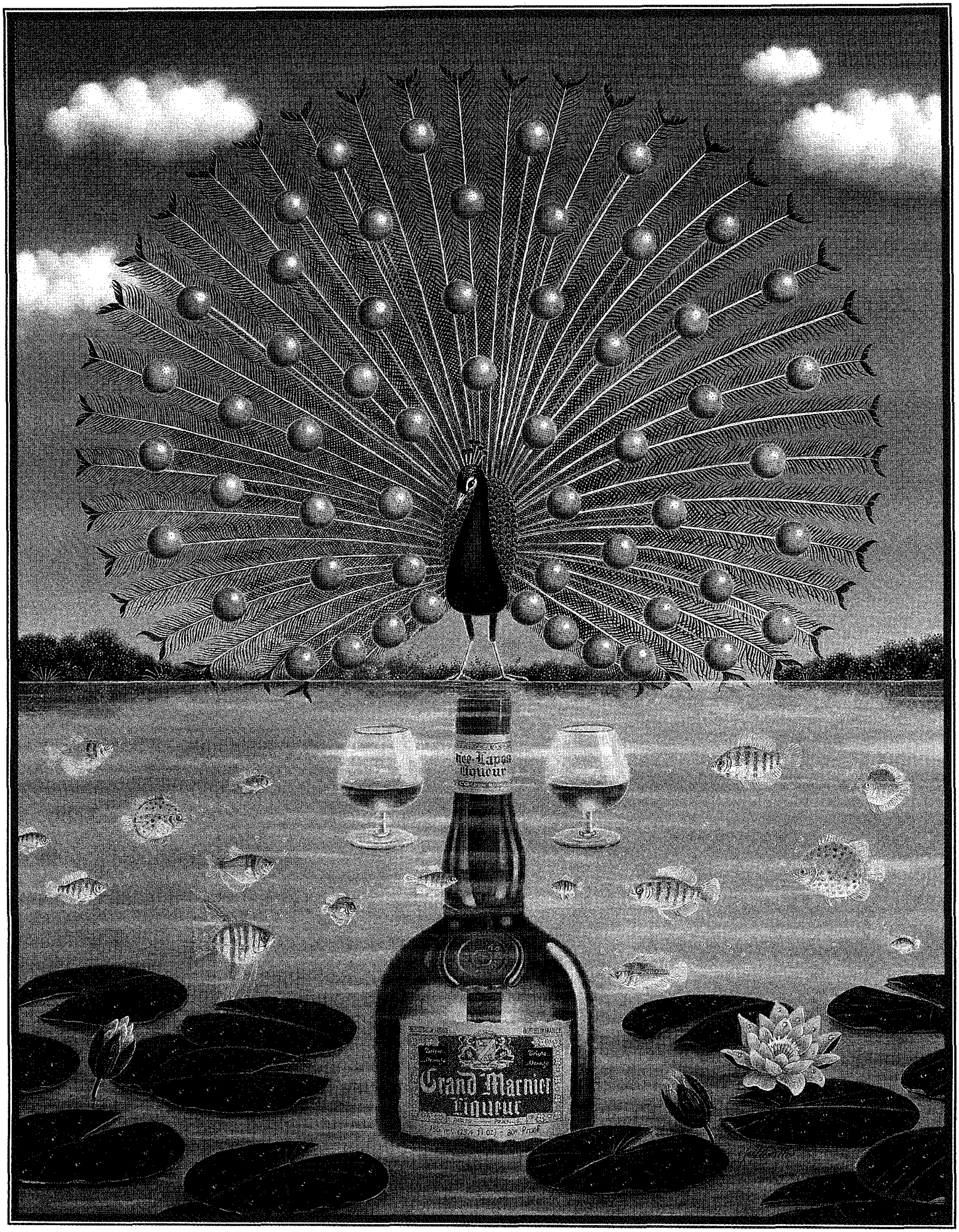
DANCE

Last August, Beate Gordon, the director of performing arts at the Asia Society, travelled to the end of the earth: the Siberian island of Sakhalin, in the Asian part of the Soviet Union. She had been invited to attend an arts festival there, celebrating the hundred and twentieth anniversary of the founding of the city of Poronaysk. Mrs. Gordon wanted to make a good impression, so for her travel outfit she chose a chic frock with black-and-white polka dots, covered by a white jacket. After a thirty-two-hour journey, which included a bumpy automobile ride of several hours, from the airport to the festival city, she emerged from the car in her stylish costume. As introductions were being made, she suddenly noticed her mirror image—an official of the local government was wearing nearly the same dress, but covered by a black jacket. "I asked her where she got it," Mrs. Gordon told us recently, "and she replied that one of the Japanese ships that carry a lot of goods to Sakhalin these days had brought it in."

Now that fashionable New Yorkers are taking meetings in Siberia, the Siberians seem to be taking over New York. (See Music, page 22.) The result of Mrs. Gordon's trip, for example, is a program entitled "Siberian Music and Dance from the Island of Sakhalin, the Soviet Far East," to be performed at the Asia Society (Park Avenue at 70th Street) March 2-11, in conjunction with "Crossroads of Continents: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska," an exhibition at the American Museum of Natural History through March 25. Last March, Mrs. Gordon brought over performers from the Nanai peoples, as well as others from different parts of Siberia; the sense of authenticity—of deep purpose and authoritative timing—in their songs, dances, and stories was very strong. Different Nanai artists will perform this year, along with members of the Orok and Nivkh peoples, none of whom have ever been outside their homeland. The program includes acrobatic dances and a jump-rope contest, as well as Siberian shaman's dances, which, in the view of some scholars, are the wellsprings of world theatre.

Feld Ballets/NY—Feb. 27 at 8: "Theatre," "The Gods Amused," "Danzon Cubano," and "Ah Scarlatti." . . . ¶ Feb. 28 at 7: "Contra Pose," "Mother Nature" (New York première), and "Ah Scarlatti." (A benefit.) . . . ¶ March 1 at 8 and March 4 at 2: "Excursions," "Asia," "Medium: Rare," and "Mother Nature." . . . ¶ March 2 at 8 and March 4 at 7:30: "Contra Pose," "At Midnight," and "The Jig Is Up." . . . ¶ March 3 and March 6 at 8: "Excursions," "Kore," "Charmed Lives" (première), and "Skara Brae." . . . ¶ March 7 at 8: "Contra Pose," "Shadow's Breath," "Danzon Cubano," and "Mother Nature." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. The season continues through April 1.)

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company—Presenting a revival of "A Brahms Symphony" and the premières of "Fandango" and "From Paris to Jupiter." With musical accompaniment from the Solisti New York Chamber Orchestra, directed by Ransom Wilson. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Feb. 27 at 7:30, Feb. 28-March 2 at 8, March 3 at 3 and 8, and March 4 at 3.)



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IN THE WORDS of the famous poet, T. S. Eliot, "April is the cruelest month."

Indeed it is. The thought of writing big checks for income tax does little to quiet one's soul.

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Francine became frazzled.

Orville became ornery.

Myron became morose.

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At the Ritz, William and Jim Reid of the Jesus and Mary Chain

NIGHT LIFE

MIDWAY through Angelina Réaux's second number at the Ballroom—Poulenc's "Les Chemins de l'Amour"—someone accidentally dropped a wineglass on the floor. We were already quite involved with the show and, hearing the shattering glass, our first thought was, This woman can *sing*. In many ways, Réaux, whose rich, theatrical soprano can be heard here through March 4, is a contradictory figure. She segues from Korngold to Arlen; she sings "Happiness Is a Thing Called Joe" in a full-length fur; she wears a gold, diamond-studded Mickey Mouse watch. In 1988, Réaux had a one-woman Kurt Weill show at the Public Theatre, and in 1989 she sang Mimi for Leonard Bernstein's recording of "La Bohème." Réaux is still at her best with Weill and Puccini, but the current show also includes a handful of lively, off-center songs by her young accompanist, Ricky Ian Gordon.

The Ballroom show does have a few hitches, technical and otherwise. For instance, there must be a better way to light Ms. Réaux's game-show-style, through-the-crowd entrances and exits. At present, the audience turns to observe her coy, slinky moves only to be confronted with a spotlight so blinding that it seems to have been intended for another venue—Shea Stadium, say. Another minor disappointment is that the singer can seem a little aloof. She does not break character—does not say so much as a "thank you"—until after her first encore. Réaux is capable of campy, self-effacing variations on the diva theme, but when all is said and done one wishes for a little more of who she is and a little less of who she's not.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Through March 3, the newly refurbished Oak Room is home to **ANN HAMPTON CALLAWAY,** a fine singer-pianist who can imitate Billie Holliday and Marlene Dietrich, sing an E-flat above high C, and say without sounding immodest, "People often come up to me and ask why I'm not famous." Her shows are Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen. **JULIE KURNITZ,** a manic singer-comedienne known for straight- and not-so-straight-faced renditions of songs by Cole Porter and others, follows Ms. Callaway with shows at eleven-fifteen. Dining.

Astro's Turf, Second Ave. at 94th St. (289-0415)—A goofy, futuristic theme bar apparently designed by George Jetson. On the ceiling and floor one finds astronaut dolls playing golf on amoeba-shaped greens; over the bar, a giant green octopus (a sextopus, actually, but who's counting?); and, on Thursday night's menu, a drink called the Woo Woo Wedge. On a recent night, while a Blues Brothers-ish band held sway onstage, patrons were trying to figure out what the hell NASA had to do with golf, when someone informed them that the longest golf drive ever made was on that distant, grassless country club known as the moon. The informant didn't know if the astronaut in question went on to play every hole. D.j.s are usually on the premises, but there is live music Mondays after ten.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A big, soigné cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, in the heart of the fur and fashion-student districts. Singer **ANGELINA RÉAUX** is in residence here through March 4. **PEGGY LEE** begins a run on March 6. Dining.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—The jazz personnel turns over nearly every night at this airy, loftlike restaurant-bar, in the gray zone between Zabar's and Columbia. Some may cry gentrification at the sight of the pastel walls, the potted greenery, and the bar crowded with Frascati sippers, but the floor-to-ceiling windows make for some fine Broadway-viewing. The trumpeter and flugelhornist **RED RODNEY** leads a quintet March 1-3. Mr. Rodney was a leading bebopper in his youth—he played with Charlie Parker's group from 1949 to 1950—but then he took a long sabbatical. When he finally reëmerged, in the seventies, bebop was still foremost in his mind. Guitarist Rodney Jones' quartet claims Feb. 28. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A jazz club that would be a perfect stop on a bus tour (there's even a souvenir shop that sells Kodak). It's a good idea to make a reservation and show up well in advance. The jazz through March 4 is Brazilian: **AIRTO & FLORA PURIM** and **HERBIE MANN** & Jasil Brazz. The **OSCAR PETERSON** trio gets under way on March 6. First set at nine.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. The walls and columns are basic black with some rainbow detailing here and there—the place looks a little like the outside of a van. Holly Near, a folk-pop singer-songwriter whose songs have been known to praise women, damn nuclear power, and exhibit other signs of clear thinking, will be here March 1; singer-guitarist Kenny Rankin, a purveyor of good-mood jazz-pop and mellow scat work, comes in on March 3; and March 6 belongs to singer-pianist **PETER HAMMILL,** an often spellbinding, raw-voiced avant-garde rocker, formerly of the strange British aggregate Van Der Graaf Generator. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. Pianist **JOANNE BRACKEEN** and bassist **CECIL MC BEE** are here through March 3. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

Carlos I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—With its arch-windowed stone exterior, wrought-iron door, and no-cheap-stuff woodwork, this is a club built to last. It's also a nice place to listen to jazz, eat Caribbean food, and drink 150-proof-rum concoctions. Percussionist Fukushi Tainaka's quartet is in action Feb. 27-March 4; **JIMMY HEATH'S** foursome begins work on March 6. Music from nine-thirty.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home to the gravelly contralto **JULIE WILSON.** Ms. Wilson's new offering—in the past half-dozen years she has dedicated revues to famous and obscure chatter by Cole Porter, Stephen Sondheim, the Gershwins, and others—takes on the music of Cy Coleman, whose work can also be heard in "City of Angels," currently on Broadway. Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Bemelmans Bar, Ronny Whyte presides at the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Cat Club, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—This room, which caters to thrash-metal buffs and cooler heads on weeknights, opens its doors on Sundays to swing-music fans, most of whom come to Lindy. The dancers are young, old, middle-aged, semi-pro, one hundred per cent amateur, happy, earnest, in love; shoe styles (men's) run from white bucks to clodhoppers to gleaming patent-leather jobs. Bill Conway and the Swing Express will be here on March 4. Music from eight to midnight.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—A new, candlelit catacomb just east of Union Square. In an effort to get patrons close to the action, the owners—one of whom previously owned Sweet Basil and managed Indigo Blues—have crowded Condon's stage with tables. The result is that diners here will either find the atmosphere snug and intimate or spend a good deal of time trying to figure out where to run in the event of a fire. Tuesdays through Sundays belong to **TOMMY FLANAGAN,** a sparkling bebop pianist of whom the late Bradley Cunningham once said, "Piano players are supposed to make you laugh then break your heart, and that's what Tommy does." Music after ten.

Eagle Tavern, 355 W. 14th St., at Ninth Ave. (924-0275)—An Irish pub in the meat-packing district, not too far from the boondocks. In the front room, barbirds study the TV and growl about one thing or another, and in the back room another crowd listens to Irish folk musicians (on Fridays) and native string bands (on Saturdays). On March 2, flute and fife player and former Rhode Island fisherman Skip Healy comes in with Bob Drouin (bouzouki) and Mance Grady (bodhran and bones). Music from nine.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through a heavy-duty steel door, through a green Plexiglas door, down a long, narrow, fun-house passageway (mirrors in which you can watch yourself multiply; corrugated-metal siding you can riffle), and down a flight of stairs, you'll find this velvet-and-mirror-walled *boîte*. **JOE HENDERSON,** an individualistic, hard-to-peg tenor saxophonist, who tends to dominate the bandstand with his technical mastery and emotional range, brings in a quartet (**KENNY BARRON, AL FOSTER,** and **MIKE RICHMOND**) Feb. 27-March 4. The **HELEN MERRILL** trio kicks off on March 6. Mondays are set aside for the guitarist and inventor **LES PAUL,** who was known as Rhubarb Red back in the twenties and thirties, when he was an itinerant country picker. Music from eight. Dining.

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—A satisfying combination of Chinese food and homegrown music. Rubberneckers may see the moon wheeling by the greenhouse roof on its regular tour of romantic Manhattan. The pianists who pass through here are among Gotham's finest. Feb. 27-March 4, the place belongs to pianist **JUNIOR MANCE** and bassist **MARTY RIVERA.** Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

J's, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An unpretentious second-floor jazz retreat. On March 4 at eight-thirty, the stage here will accommodate "Starla by Starlight," a show featuring vocalist and club fixture Starla Smith and highlighting the music of the recently departed (Sammy Fain, Irving Berlin, and Jimmy Van Heusen). With John Meyer, piano. The rest of the week there's music from eight Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—An Old New York kind of place, with dark-wood panelling, white tablecloths, and brass-figurine lamps. The musicians gather around the Steinway that sits in the dining room, but chin music is often the dominant sound. The piano-bass team of **Ray Gallon** and **Ron Carter** holds sway here Feb. 27-March 3. Music from nine-thirty.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A cheery, climate-controlled restaurant and bar featuring a load of snazzy Gibson guitars, some Washington Square-style portraits of folks like Bo Diddley and Dr. John, and funky French fry–potato chip hybrids. A bleary-eyed patron here was recently heard remarking, "I don't know about you people, but I'm feeling a lot of love in this room." The **Hunter-Ronson Band**—the singer Ian Hunter, the guitarist Mick Ronson, and others—comes in March 1-2. Ronson joined up with Hunter's Mott the Hoople in the glam-rock group's unwinding days. When the band split up, in the mid-seventies, Ronson and Hunter kept at it, continuing to tour and releasing such albums as "You're Never Alone with a Schizophrenic." Music after nine. Dining.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A good sound system, cheap drinks, and a regular-guy atmosphere make this restaurant-bar, home of the "Hoboken sound" and of the phrase "jangly guitars," a popular hangout for musicians and their followers. Manhattanites who stay through the second set will need all their Scout training to get home, but the smell of the nearby Maxwell House factory may give them a boost. On March 3, there's a tripleheader featuring Buffalo Tom, Fish and Roses, and Fire in the Kitchen.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steakhouse, and the photos on the walls may look like Sardi's leftovers, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples sprung from the legacy of Fred and Ginger. **Vince Giordano,** the dapper, slick-haired bassist, crooner, and conductor, is here with his tuxedoed **Nighthawks** every Monday and Tuesday at eight-thirty, running through material by Fletcher Henderson, Hoagy Carmichael, and other old-timers. Show times for the rest of the week vary.

Ritz, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—There's usually a good reason to go the Ritz, but there's almost always a better reason to stay away. Even leaving aside its new midtown address—the sort of neighborhood you wake up in after you've been kidnapped—there's still the club's distressing pack-them-in, get-them-the-hell-out management tactics, and the fact that the atmosphere here, on any given night, is something between those of a high-school gym class and a police state. The **Jesus and Mary Chain** performs on March 3. This young British band's latest offering, "Automatic," has their usual sonic barrage—an appealing, brain-stuffing wall of over-drive guitar—but the songs, for the most part, sound a bit tired. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

Spo-dee-o-dee, 565 W. 23rd St., at Eleventh Ave. (206-1990)—A night club in a part of Chelsea the real-estate agents don't show you. It's a modest-sized space with a dance floor, a stage (there's live music seven nights a week), and a pell-mell décor: Victorian-style chandeliers, movie-theatre drapes, murals of Cotton Club-era dancers. At peak hours (late), you'll get an eyeful of waves, perms, teased and sprayed locks, lip gloss, pumps, fishnets, fringed jackets, leather pants, and designer-outlet new-wave apparel.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A convivial and crowded jazz club—but not so crowded, as Yogi Berra said of another night spot, that nobody comes here anymore. **Stanley Turrentine,** a blues-minded tenor saxophonist who apprenticed with Ray Charles' and Max Roach's groups before striking out on his own in the sixties, makes a visit Feb. 27-March 4. **Art Blakey & the Jazz Messengers** begin a week-long stay on March 6. Shows from ten. Dining.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Located on a Chelsea block that's fast becoming an urban Disneyland (a pool hall, an indoor miniature-golf course, a trendy all-night diner, Limelight around the corner), this roller-rink-size bar-and-restaurant is slicker than the original Tramps, but the emphasis on solid rock and blues remains. **Terrance Simien & the Mallet Playboys,** a young, rowdy, play-hard outfit from the bayou country, begin a stint on March 2 (they're off March 4). Simien, who is an accordionist and singer, has a range of interests, from zydeco to blues to rock to country.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The late Max Gordon, who opened this holiest of jazz shrines in 1935, once described the club's early patrons as a mix of "poets, W.P.A. writers, hustlers, broads on the make, and moochers." Mr. Gordon continued to run the place until his death last year, and always weathered the trials of club ownership with equanimity, whether it was Harry Belafonte's exposed navel (Max didn't approve, but the customers did) or the time Charles Mingus tore off the front door. Through March 4, **Shirley Horn,** a fine singer-pianist who plays and sings in a spare, unadorned style, will be here with a trio (including **Buck Hill** on sax for the last three nights). Mondays are in the hands of a big band formerly led by the late **Mel Lewis.** Music after ten.

Woody's, 82 E. 4th St. (982-3686)—Rolling Stones guitarist Ron Wood's recently opened club is a basic-black basement with mirrors, comfy couches, and rotating spotlights. Stones memorabilia, with an emphasis on Ronnie himself, provide the primary decoration. At this club you can learn about subtle nuances of heavy-metal history. A band that played here recently honored all Bad Company requests, whereas one for Led Zeppelin received the disdainful reply "Come on, this is New York." Will & the Bushmen and Splat Cats appear on March 2. Shows Wednesdays through Saturdays from about eleven. There's also an art gallery upstairs (entrance at 65 Second Avenue), where photographs by Bob Gruen are now on display.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Many fine piano-bass teams pass through this pleasant, peach-toned Italian restaurant and bar, but they're up against stiff odds: the bar scene is often bustling, and the food itself is a major distraction. Bassist Rufus Reid and pianist Rob Schneiderman are in residence through March 3. Music weeknights from eight and Sundays from seven.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

WE don't know whether it's common knowledge that Broadcast Arts created Pee-wee's first Playhouse. Nevertheless, an opening-nighter wasn't far from wrong when he looked around the elaborately set-strewn Quick! (at 6 Hubert Street) and remarked that if Pee-wee ever grew up he'd want to live here (though Quick! actually looks more like NBC's Studio 8-H before a dress rehearsal of "Saturday Night Live"). The statement, however, assumed that all who enjoyed Quick!'s opening night were Social Security-card-carrying adults.

Perhaps the State Liquor Authority would have no trouble with some of these clubgoers' I.D.s, but a few of the Area originals who returned to the site of their former haunt to witness its transformation were more shocked to find themselves padded shoulder to padded shoulder with a generation that had no idea that Jay McInerney had slept here. And while the veterans surveyed the place for former liaisons and vestiges of yesteryear, the newer pack commandeered the pig-shaped benches, the imitation Vari-lites, the Temple of Doom riser, and the first three rows of the six-deep line at the bar, stalled by bartenders who appeared to operate with a total collective experience of four weeks. "Don't you feel old?" a contemporary asked Rudolf, Quick!'s director. Rudolf looked at him as if to say, "I know you are, but what am I?"

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

"New Works, First Runs"—A program of short videotapes: "Blind Country," by Erika Beckman; "OnOurOwn," by Joe Gibbons, with Tony Oursler; "DiAna's Hair Ego: AIDS Info Up Front," by Ellen Spiro; "He Was Once," by Mary Hestand; and "Desire, Inc.," by Lynn Hershman. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. Tuesdays through Saturdays from 1 to 6. Through March 3.)

"Crowbar"—A play, of sorts, by Mac Wellman, presented by En Garde Arts and performed in the old Victory Theatre, which has most recently been a porn-film house. The score is by David Van Tieghem. (209 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Tuesdays through Sundays at 8.)

"Increase"—A music-theatre work, with Lili Taylor. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. March 1-4 at 8.)

"If Men Could Talk, the Stories They Could Tell"—Final performances of Richard Elovich's latest work. (P. S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. March 1-4 at 8.)

"Chance's Place"—A performance piece (by Jim Neu) about a performance space. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. March 1-4 at 8:30. For information about tickets, call 674-8112.)

"Babel Stories"—A solo performance by Matthew Maguire, which is part of a larger work, "The Tower." (45th Street Theatre, 354 W. 45th St. 333-7471. March 2-3 and March 9 at 11.)

ART

IN Gerhard Richter's work the distinction between "objective" and "nonobjective" painting is revealed as the fool's conundrum it always was. Over the past couple of decades, Richter has produced work in alternating styles of painting—styles that many consider to be formally and ideologically opposite. He paints landscapes and still-lifes that have a quasi-photographic appearance yet manage to evoke virtually the whole tradition of painting in the European north; his landscapes, though, are emptied of allegorical symbols, and his still-lifes are without the emblems of *vanitas*. He also paints gestural abstractions that suggest the rhythmic abandon of a de Kooning yet look as if they had been fixed by a photochemical process. Faced with a Richter in either genre, we may not be sure whether we are detecting the white heat of zealotry—the artist's will to mastery—or a gelid gloss of reason: a postmortem.

Richter's elaborate paradoxes may have come to a breaking point in his most recent work. While the Photo-Realist images are at a standstill—they don't denote much of anything right now, not even absence itself—the abstract works look as if they have gone through fission, fusion, or radiation at least twice over. Some of these paintings (recently on view at Sperone Westwater) are large, complex abstractions whose spectacular chromatic progressions and layers of peeling and puckering painted "skins" seem to proclaim a new kind of springtime for painting—not an especially pretty spring, but one full of difficult burgeonings and possibly cancerous cellular dynamism. At Marian Goodman—where the Richter show has been extended through this week—there are several abstractions in grisaille that, with brilliant painterly detail and bravura brushwork, suggest an ultimate geological winter: a world frozen stiff.

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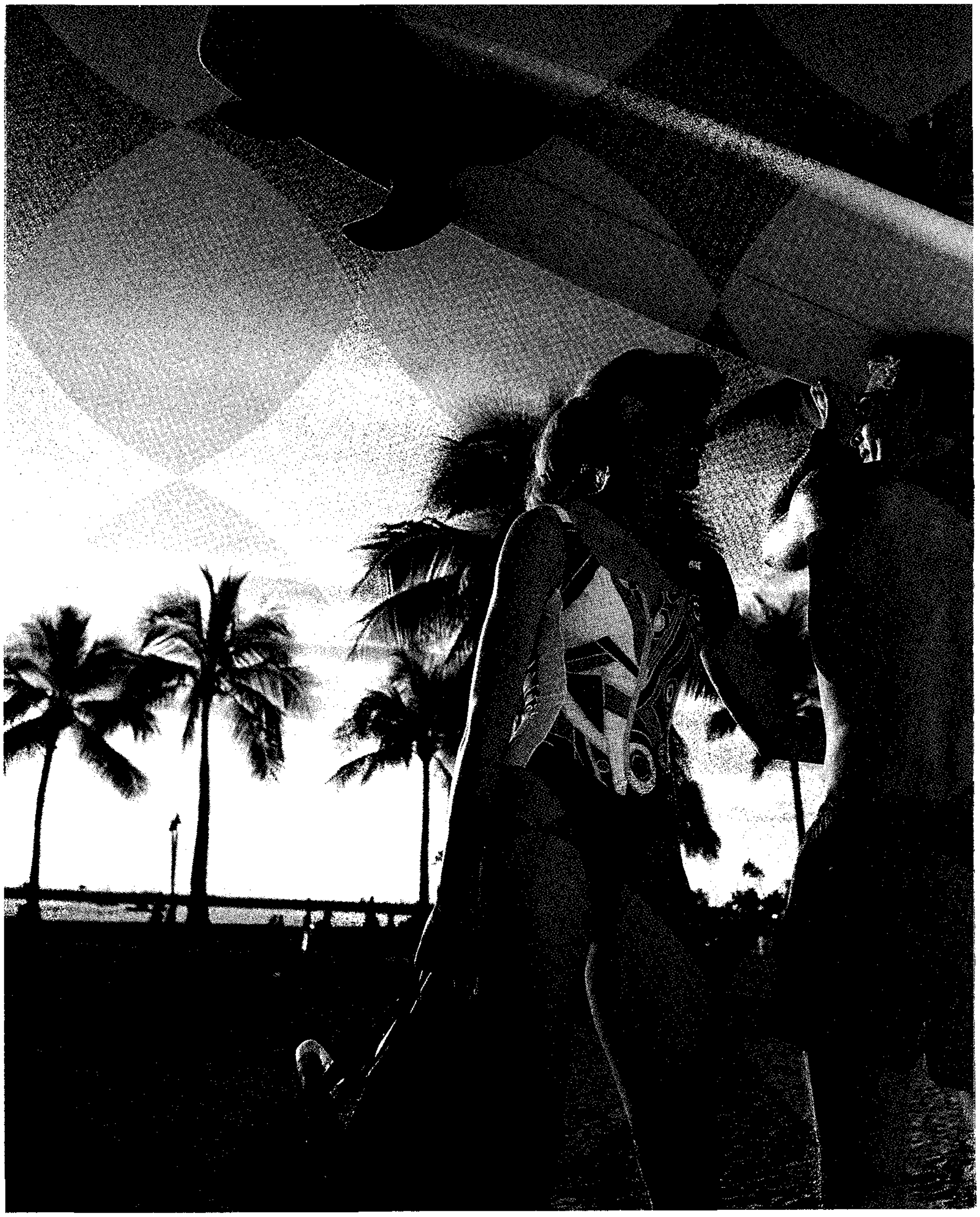

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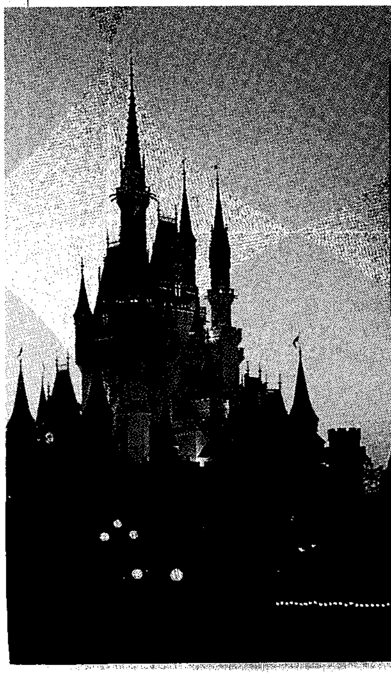

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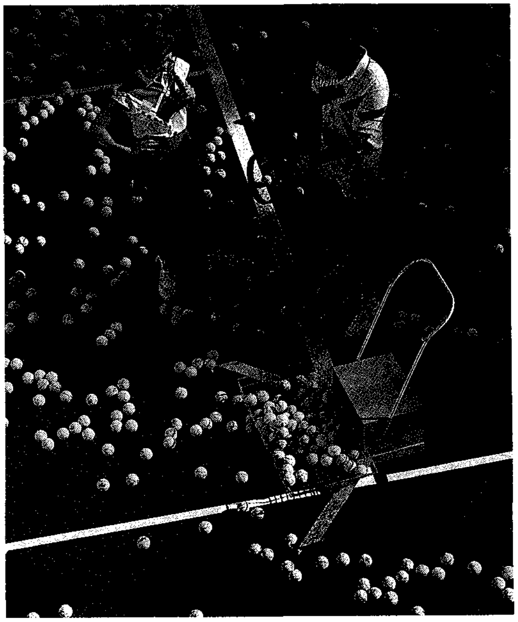

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Honolulu-Kahala Hilton
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Kahuku, Oahu-Turtle Bay Hilton & Country Club
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Kailua-Kona-Kona Hilton Beach & Tennis Resort
Oceanfront on the Kona Coast.
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Las Vegas Hilton
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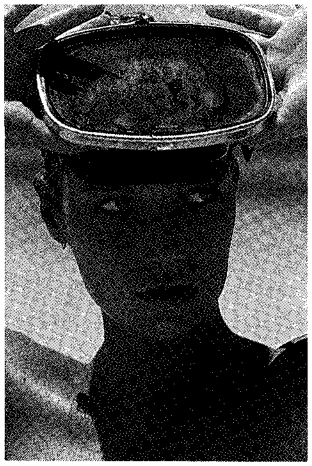

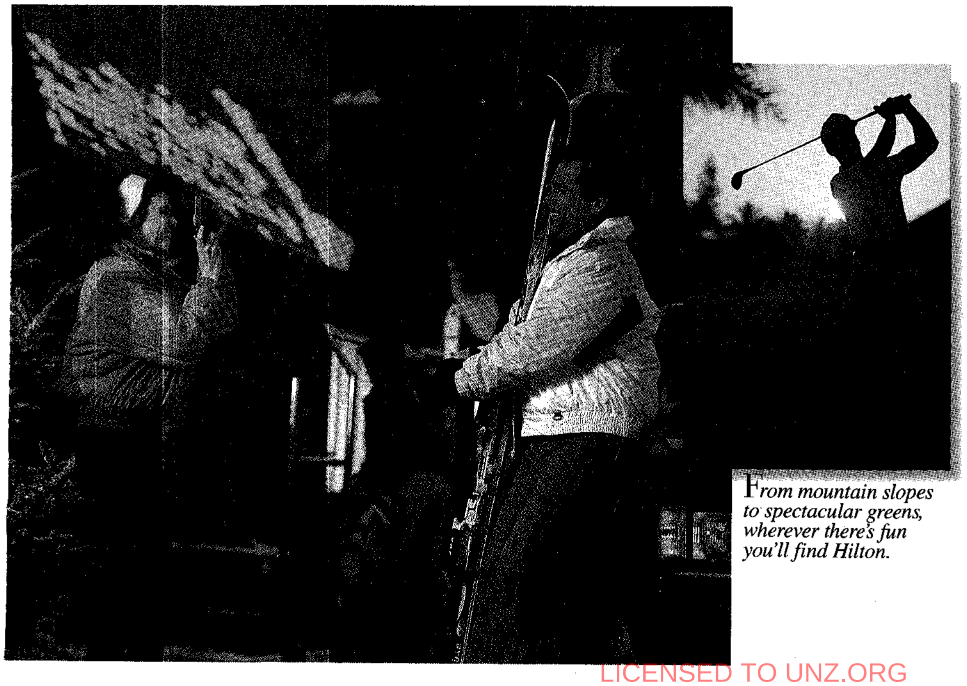

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MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Two versions of Caravaggio's "Lute Player" are on view, along with three other early paintings: "The Fortune Teller," "The Cardsharps," and "The Musicians." Through April 22. . . . ¶ "Gold of Africa: The Barbier-Mueller Collection." This cohesive show, assembled from a Swiss collection, demonstrates that the world's most fanciful gold rings come from Ghana, just as the largest and most sumptuous gold earrings are those from Mali. There are staggering amounts of gold here, including a pair of human jawbones cast in the metal. Through March 11. . . . ¶ The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection contains some important Matisses, some fine Picassos and Giacomettis, and a dynamite Vlaminck, but the selection here offers neither an illuminating historical view nor an in-depth understanding of a significant moment (little Expressionism, no Dada, no Futurism). Through April 1. . . . ¶ "The Age of Napoleon" is the best exhibition the Costume Institute has put on in some time. Through April 15. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—The twist on Robert Moskowitz' brand of minimalist painting is that his central image is always a representation of something—usually phallic, and subtly so—like a skyscraper, a cane, a smokestack. An exhilarating retrospective traces the motif's methodical evolution. It begins with a provocative and unexpected soiled-looking painting with an actual window shade in its center (1962), followed by one with a paper bag and another with a manila envelope. The use of real objects is not exactly the Fluxus gesture it may seem to be; these works have an elegance and formality, in the best sense of the words. What follows is a series of paintings, from the sixties, of corners of rooms, each in a different color, ending with "The Perfect Painting"—and perfect it is, with a combination of illusionistic depiction and seductive flatness. Next come the mature works of the mid- and late seventies, when the painter reaches full stride. The works from the eighties look pretty much the same formally, but the tension between form and field, light and color, and image and paint that makes the artist's best work sublime is diffused and Moskowitz' painting is reduced, distressingly, to mannered elegance. Through May 1. . . . ¶ "Photography Until Now," a show of nearly three hundred works, examines the technological, commercial, and creative developments that have shaped the medium over the past century and a half. Through May 29. . . . ¶ Photographs by Tina Barney. Through April 10. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—*Before the museum closes in May to complete* restoration, visitors can see about a hundred and fifty works in "Masterpieces from the Collection," including paintings and sculptures by Chagall, Kandinsky, Mondrian, Léger, Calder, and Giacometti. Starts March 3. (Open Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Sculpture from 1965 to 1975 as represented by ten artists, among them Eva Hesse, Robert Smithson, Richard Serra, and Lynda Benglis. The first half of the show is already open on the second floor; the second half opens March 2. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—A different kind of Prague Spring appears in a show called "Czech Modernism: 1900-1945," which includes more than a hundred paintings, sculptures, and works on paper by thirteen artists. Starts March 2. (A section of the show, covering Czech photography from the same period, is at the International Center of Photography.) . . . ¶ "The Blue of Jingtai," a display of thirty-five Chinese cloisonné vessels, mostly from the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1912). Nineteen-twelve is also the year these pieces entered the museum's collection. . . . ¶ A show of fifty paintings, prints, and drawings by American artists who were affiliated with Alfred Stieglitz and his Gallery 291: Marsden Hartley, Arthur G. Dove, John Marin, Georgia O'Keeffe, Abraham Walkowitz, and Max Weber. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

bill Wegman

Self-portrait by William Wegman

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—A show of six complete Ice Age skeletons—including those of two wolves, a sabre-toothed cat, and a giant thirty-five-hundred-pound sloth—that were exhumed from the La Brea Tar Pits, in Los Angeles. Also on display are smaller fossils of reptiles, birds, plants, and the cast skull of the nine-thousand-year-old so-called La Brea Woman, the only human representative from the tar pits. Through April 1. (Open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—There are some wonderful objects in "The Japanese Influence on American Ceramics" that emulate a Japanese shape, sense of color, or surface while retaining their own identity—a Fulper vase, a Ron Nagle pot, and a Betty Woodman basket, for example. But the vast majority of work in the show is nothing in the face of the real McCoy, which is occasionally exhibited alongside. Through March 25. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Art from Bhutan." Buddhism came from Tibet to this mountain kingdom in the eighth century, and many of the ritual objects on view here resemble those of the source. Most of the water vessels, musical instruments, and incense burners are as decorative as South Asian art gets. But there are also some more generally likable sculptural objects—figurative sculptures of Buddhas in bronze, ivory, and rhinoceros horn. A gold-and-silver staff and trident with devilish skulls, which are used, according to a wall label, to "sever neurotic tendencies," radiate an intense power. A carved-wood *tashigomang*—a portable shrine with deities behind doors behind doors behind deities—is the highlight of the show. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—A show of Alexander Calder's homemade art: jewelry, toys, tools, and furnishings he whipped up for himself, his family, and his friends. Included are necklaces and brooches made with precious metals, and rude tin roasting pans and spatulas. Through March 11. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—One of the many ebullient pieces in a show of works by the brilliant and irresistibly charming Thomas Rowlandson is a watercolor (circa 1790-1800) titled "A French Valet and English Lackey." The lackey, who evokes a shambling old hound dog, looks to his fellow-servant with dumb wonderment. The valet, *par contre,* sits daintily cross-legged, carefully coiffed, holding a demitasse, enunciating, gesticulating—and, inexplicably, he appears to be breasted. Revolution be damned! This *citoyen* has become Madame's own poodle. Through April 8. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—During Japan's Kamakura period (1185-1333), power shifted from the court to the samurai. In this dramatic installation the court paintings—mostly scrolls with angular portrayals of poets—run down one wall, and swords, gleaming with perfection, run down the opposite wall in a duel for refinement and mastery. Through April 8. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—A show of more than a hundred illuminated manuscripts from fifteenth- and early-sixteenth-century Holland that indicates the influence these works had on later painters. Starts March 1. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The Academy's hundred-and-sixty-fifth annual exhibition is a juried show that includes work in all mediums. Through March 7. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

The New Museum, *583 Broadway—Mary Kelly's* installation on sexual politics contains, among other pieces, a history of the women's movement since 1968 presented on eight plates of stainless steel. Through April 8. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—Spring training for non-players in a show called "Diamonds Are Forever," which offers the reflections of contemporary authors and artists on that most American of pastimes: baseball. The parks, players, equipment, and action are all immortalized, by fans such as Claes Oldenburg, Edna Ferber, Nicholas Nixon, Roger Angell, and Andy Warhol. Through April 21. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 6.)

Queens Museum, Flushing Meadow Park—At the "New British Painting" exhibition, viewers may get the feeling that they have gone back to a future of Dickensian woes, or of Depression-era specialties such as Expressionistic satire, Magic Realism, and Socialist allegory. Ken Currie's "Workshop of the World (Hope and Optimism in Spite of Present Difficulties)" and "In the City Bar" positively erupt with the spirit of nineteen-thirties radical unionism. And Stephen Conroy's neo-Victorian, workaday visions of tight-lipped, buttoned-up young men in close, seemingly gaslit interiors evoke Walter Sickert, as well as Degas in his most sombre, Zola-conscious moments. Through March 18. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5:30.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—This show of contemporary sub-Saharan African art should inspire serious rethinking of such issues as cultural imperialism and the function of art within a society. It does not, however, enrich our understanding of contemporary Africa, nor does it present a set of issues, visions of stirring beauty, or a window onto a world about which Western artists have fantasized throughout the century. Some of the nine artists—from Ghana, Zimbabwe, Senegal, and elsewhere—were educated in European traditions, but, according to the exhibition catalogue, many of the painting and sculpture methods they use are rooted in African culture. Whatever its intentions, most of the show looks familiar, and not compellingly so. Exceptions include the work of Tapfuma Gutsa, from Zimbabwe, who takes on Western sculpture much as the Cubists took on African tribal artifacts—he puts Brancusi and the Venus of Willendorf to good use. And Rosemary Karuga, a Kenyan, makes charming figurative collages out of colorful bits of cut-up magazines. Through May 6. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Center for African Art—In yet another provocative exhibition, the Center questions the very value of what we have come to call art work. This time the subject is portraiture, but the show is really about representation in broader terms. Through texts and traditional sculptures in wood, bronze, and other materials, it contrasts the concept of portrayal in African history with that in the West and East. In a wonderfully bizarre reversal of the modern perception of African art as wild and raw, many of the sub-Saharan works, which attempt to capture the person portrayed in the fullest sense, make much realistic Western portraiture look positively primitive. Through Aug. 12. (54 E. 68th St. Opens at noon on Sundays.)

A Tribute to Alfred H. Barr, Jr.—It's a bit odd for the Forum Gallery to pay tribute to Alfred Barr with an exhibition of oil paintings and watercolors by nineteen early-twentieth-century American painters, since the great founding director of the Museum of Modern Art championed European modernism at the expense of its backwoods American cousin. There are some truly great paintings here, however, most notably Edward Hopper's "House by the Railroad," the quintessential portrait of American isolation, and Georgia O'Keeffe's "Radiator Building," which provides an amusing turn on the artist's self-perpetuated mythology: the name of her husband and promoter, Alfred Stieglitz, appears in red-hot lights atop a skyscraper. Through March 10. (1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Short List—**james grashow,** Stone, 48 E. 86th St. (through March 2); **neil jenney,** Mathes, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (through March 31).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Terence La Noue—And-the-kitchen-sink abstraction skillfully done with collaged surfaces that have been worked and worked, bright colors against dark grounds, snaking lines, masks. Sometimes the paintings are muddy, but usually they look like Klee grown up. Through March 3. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Steve Currie—Overcrafted organic sculpture. Through March 3. (Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Martha Diamond—Recent paintings by an artist known for her broad, "artless" strokes. Her ostensible subject—the city today—is more specifically discernible than in earlier works, yet it continues to seem a pretext for something else that isn't quite clear yet. In "Carriage"—a rosy, feather-brushed horizon with a fluttering central blue—an abstract allegory seems to be forming. Through March 3. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Greg Drasler—Paintings of luggage—a nice idea stretched too thin. Through March 3. (Shea & Beker, 20 W. 57th St.)

Sondra Freckelton—Watercolors of zinnias on rocking chairs and begonias on quilts: it doesn't get cozier than this. Through March 14. (Schoelkopf, 50 W. 57th St.)

Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964)—If you've lost your faith in painting, this show will restore it. During a period in which European art went through radical transformations, Morandi spent his entire life painting eternal still-lifes with the same vases, cups, and the occasional flower. Every stroke serves a purpose in these monastic paintings—small, humble, dry, and ever compelling. Through March 10. (Daverio, 41 E. 57th St.)

Izhar Patkin / Elsa Rady—The centerpiece is a wax sculpture of a mythological musical group, inspired by Sicilian grotesques, and arranged in a composition borrowed from Bernini's "Ecstasy of St. Teresa." The tumbling musicians look as if they had just stepped off Rodin's "Gates of Hell," and the composition has the whipping, snaking lines of the "Laocoön." This exhausting display of virtuosity, which has an occasional tulle tutu attached to it, is surrounded by perforated Cibachrome photographs of details of the sculpture. These images attempt to mythologize the piece, but any intended irony is overshadowed by the wild ambition of the sculpture itself. / Lovely porcelain vessels that are an amalgam of all the best characteristics of ceramics from the fifties. Some have dramatic peel-away rims as sexy as calla lilies. The vessels are bolted to aluminum shelves in an emphatic, aggressive gesture that violates the delicacy of the objects and pushes them—with varying degrees of success—into the realm of still-life. Through March 17. (Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

José María Sicilia—A few of these thick, pockmarked white-on-white paintings depict what could be wisps of light in a seductive, if somewhat clichéd, way, but the rest are highly mannered new imagism in a Mediterranean-whitewash style. Through March 17. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

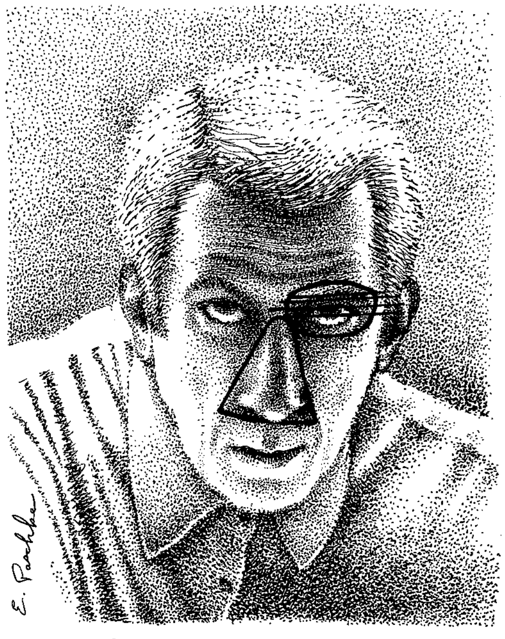
Antoni Tàpies—This great Spanish painter is experiencing an overdue reëvaluation. In his new paintings, it is clear that Tàpies has an unerring sense when it comes to composition. But the smears, spills, and graffiti scribbles in the artist's signature iron reds and watered blacks look a bit rushed. Through March 23. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Andy Warhol (1930-87)—Self-portraits in various mediums. There is only one really good painting here, the black "Camouflage Self-Portrait," seen last year at MOMA, and it's not for sale. The rest of the exhibition consists mainly of odds and ends—paintings, photo-booth strips, upgraded erstwhile give-aways—whose prices suggest a thriving industry. Through March 1. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. . . . ¶ A complementary exhibition is at Alexander, 476 Broome St., through March 3.)

Short List—**alexander archipenko,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through March 17); **jim dine,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through March 31); **loren madsen,** McKee, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 17); **gerhard richter,** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through March 1).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Michael Banicki / Christopher Sasser—Who said grid painting died decades ago? This artist is still doing dot-grid paintings, but they have got more bizarre and baroque. They are determined by an "I like" rating system that the artist maps out with absurdist delight, covering such categories as Quebec cities and "Negro League Baseball Stars." His grid of most- and least-liked Chicago telephone exchanges is a tapestry of computer circuitry, and his "Artists Rating" is so mammoth it's scary. / These endearingly ugly paintings of what could be noses and mouths overlaid with skeins of paint break with current etiquette by combining several different methods of representation—realistic, abstract, and expressionistic, for example—in the same canvas. The works seem youthfully invincible, like a guest in sneakers at a black-tie event. Through March 3. (Feature, 484 Broome St.)



Self-portrait by Ed Paschke

James Casebere / Shengé Ka Pharaoh—Casebere is best known as a photographer, but with this show it is evident that he is making a significant contribution in sculpture as well. When looking at his photographs and photographic transparencies of oddly cropped sculptural tableaux—several new ones of cups and saucers at what could be the O.K. Corral are on view here—you can never be sure whether you are looking at a tiny model that has been enlarged or at really big objects. That same unsettling uncertainty of scale is multiplied in the two huge sculptures that are the focus of this long-overdue New York début of Casebere's large-scale work. Both are truly startling. One shows the decimation of the American West and consists of a collapsed heap of arrows piercing cannons, guns, saddles, and boots, as well as a scattering of less specific cans and pots. The surfaces are smooth, unarticulated, and painted mirage white, resulting in an arresting stillness. / New drawings that have the primitive intensity of the art of the insane, and paintings that look like a watered-down mixture of Hundertwasser, Gorky, and Carroll Dunham. Through March 10. (Baghoomian, 555 Broadway.)

Suzan Etkin—The intervention of the hand in these constructions is sometimes so slight that the results can be bland, but more often than not Etkin comes up with a situation of quiet mystery, especially when she uses lights. A standing microphone whose mesh screen is lit, some portable flashlights pointed toward the cutout circular center of a glass panel, and the lines of fluorescent light that pierce the mirrored faces of three tall, skinny boxes are as much about sexual identity and penetration as about the formal structure of art. Through March 10. (Audiello, 142 Greene St.)

Robert Goodnough—A fresh, startling, and spectacular show of paintings from 1965. All consist of same-size circles in basic colors, but the artist has managed to create a variation in which each work recalls the painting of a different artist; at the same time, the pieces never seem derivative. In one, the circles are in lyrical chains that bring to mind Frankenthaler; in another, they are in a grid that is proto-LeWitt. Through March 17. (Greenberg Wilson, 560 Broadway.)

Jane Hammond—One painting in this show looks like an Alfred Jensen, another like an Elizabeth Murray. But these are weak works—like mirages—that collapse under the weight of their own opportunism. Through March 3. (Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St.)

Claudia Hart—When not pretentious, these text-laden paintings with beautiful surfaces can be engaging to muse on. However, they add up to an insufferably clever examination of the artist as a victim—of Diderot, Hume, the Jesuits, and, now, Hart. Five self-portrait drawings composed as if by Dürer depict Hart with the same tight-lipped, suspicious stare. They are captioned "The Spirit of Sadism," ". . . of Masochism," ". . . of Virtue," etc., and they provide the exhibition's only revealing glimpse into the artist herself. In them, she appears to be fiercely guarded, disillusioned, and somewhat scared. They are very nicely done, with some fine loopy lines in the hair and wavy ones in the backgrounds. They are also the first of her works that look as if they might have been enjoyable to make. Through March 3. (Hearn, 39 Wooster St.)

Peter Hutchinson—The eighties were a quiet time for this respected land artist, and the current attempt to resuscitate his position is not aided by this show. The beautiful photographic groupings of fields of crops or rocks or plants are a rehashing of the notion of the walk as art, and several sculptural groupings—a path of rocks similar to those in a few of the photographs, four pebble-and-gravel-filled containers that spell out "FORM"—appear to be short on concept. Through March 10. (Gibson, 568 Broadway.)

Bob Law—Paintings on paper of murky bluish-black expanses, each outlined in a different color, sometimes with a touch of light on the horizon; and some delightful, childlike drawings of rudimentary shapes, usually a house and a ball or two. Two drawings from 1960

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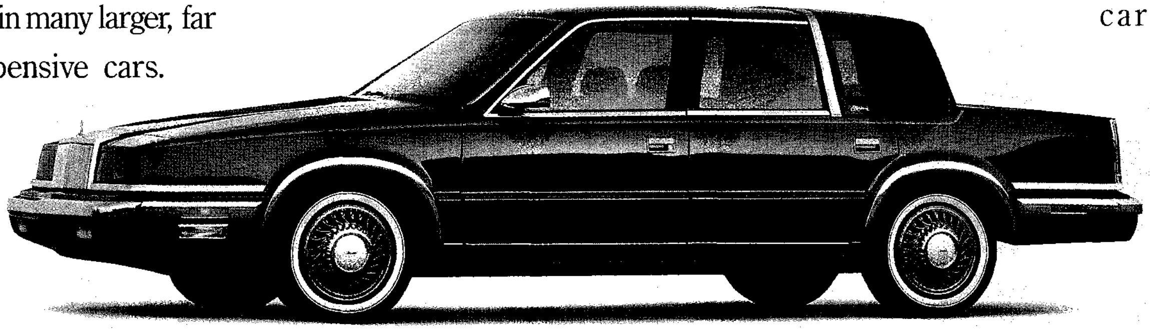

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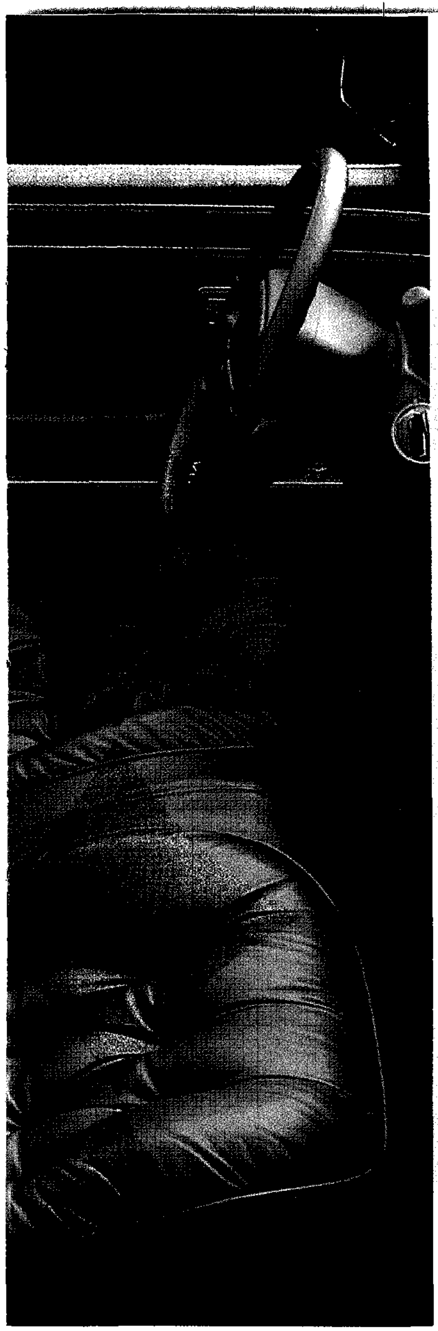

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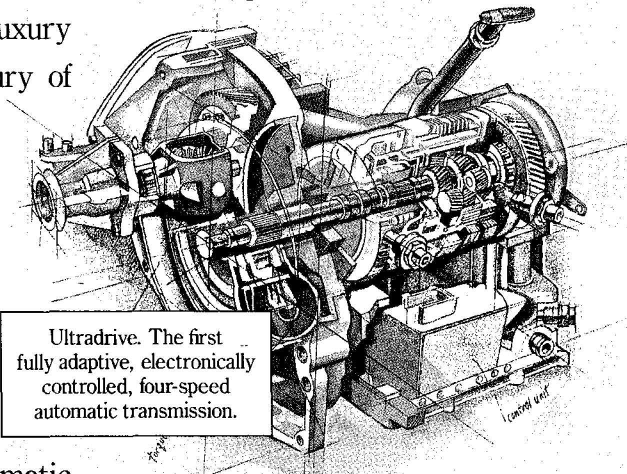

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by this British artist—better known, perhaps, as a sculptor—are especially crude and dynamic. Through March 5. (Kasmin, 580 Broadway.)

Leoncillo (1915-68)—Many of these very gestural abstract terra-cotta sculptures from the early sixties have a figurative reference (some of the titles name St. Sebastian), the muscularity of heroic painting of the fifties, and the frenetic construction of early Dubuffet sculpture. Through March 10. (Ala, 560 Broadway.)

Donald Moffett—This artist presents his own angry, Krugeresque sayings, fuelled by homophobic reactions to the AIDS crisis, in a most effective, sometimes chilling, corporate-futuristic way. Each word is presented as a photographic transparency on the face of a circular light box and each sentence is arranged in a crisp line or circle. One seems to be a biting attack on condemnations of ACT UP demonstrations: "I Spoke with Your God. He Commands Me to Cut Out Your Mouth." The statement "You and Your Kind Are Not Wanted Here" greets the visitor. "Lick" bids one goodbye. Through March 3. (Wessel O'Connor, 580 Broadway.)

Joel Otterson—An often marvellous artist who sometimes gets carried away with pure shtick. In this new show, for instance, the pièce de résistance is a big, automatized, rocking and folding Craftmatic bed with a disco sound system for a headboard, and a canopy and coverlet made of hideous, vaguely funereal, glitzy fabric. It's startling and kind of great for a second, then creepy and sad, and finally very conflicted in its implicit messages. There's another, more focussed piece with AIDSian connotations: a group of rococo chairs embroidered with the words "Cura Te Ipsum" and flanked by baskets of healthful fruit. Through March 3. (Gorney, 100 Greene St.)

Robert Rauschenberg—This potpourri of paintings does not make any real point, but it includes a dynamite work from 1965, which has the kind of street energy that made this artist famous. By the seventies, many Rauschenberg devotees became disillusioned with the artist's seemingly endless reworking *of what had become disengaged media* images in soft-focus colors, but the three works from that decade on view here have a serenity and elegance that set them miles apart from the younger generation of media artists they apparently influenced. Through March 3. (Lang & O'Hara, 568 Broadway.)

Jonathan Talbot—Cornellish collages presented as paintings in shallow relief. Through March 3. (Gimpel, 415 West Broadway.)

Allan Wexler—If you consider your life complete with a sturdy table and chair and a full cup of coffee, then this artist is your champion. In drawings, paintings, sculptures, and constructions he does *everything* imaginable with those existential common denominators. Many of the works are downright funny in their art-concept commentary, such as "Site-Specific Furniture," in which a small table and a set of chairs are supported by sticks. Wexler has a tendency to undermine his work when he gets punch-drunk on his puns, but *even then he can be endearing:* the silhouette of a table seared onto pancakes. Through March 10. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

"Selections 49"—The Drawing Center's displays of lesser-known artists are annoyingly democratic. There's always one social commentator; a collagist; a gridder; a diaristic narrator; someone who makes painfully personal little drawings, usually for the Center's glass cases; something neo-conceptual; and something in "new" materials. Fortunately, *in this instance, there is also an installation,* by Paul A. Ramirez, that takes paper about as far as it can go—out of the pages of a dictionary he has made a bomb, which is about to blow up, among other things, a huge paper sculpture of the human heart. Some new paintings on paper by Billy Copley in his ever-appealing comic-book-surrealistic mode are also worthwhile. Through March 14. (35 Wooster St. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

"Storyline"—*An exemplary show of narrative* paintings, with an unexpected range of peculiar and provocative juxtaposition. It includes Neil Jenney's "Fish and Pole" (1969), which is a funny portrait of a battle with no survivors; Jan Müller's "The Search for the Unicorn" (1957); and Mark Tansey's "Homage to Susan Sontag" (1982), which is quite simply a brilliant iconographic puzzle. Through March 3. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

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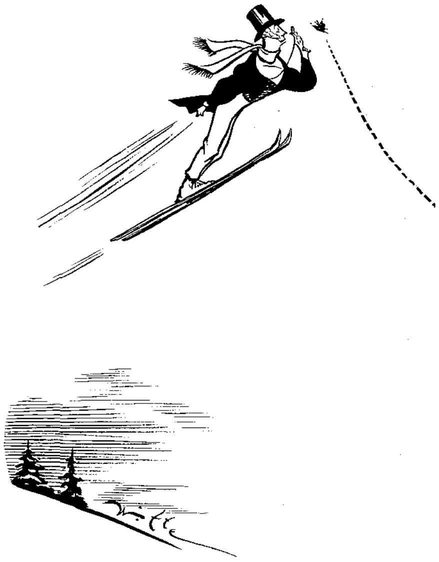
Short List—**WALTER DAHN,** Gladstone, 99 Greene St. (through March 24); **WILL INSLEY,** Protetch, 560 Broadway (through March 24); **WIN KNOWLTON,** Blum Helman Warehouse, 80 Greene St. *(through March 24);* **GARY LANG,** Nosei, 100 Prince St. (through March 21); **ED PASCHKE,** Kind, 136 Greene St. (through March 14); **CHRISTY RUPP,** P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway (through March 17); **ALLEN RUPPERSBERG,** Burgin, 130 Prince St. (through March 17); **HAN SCHUIL,** Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway (through March 24); **JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH,** Steinbaum, 132 Greene St. (through March 6); **T. L. SOLIEN,** Walls, 137 Greene St. (through March 3); **PATRICK STREZLEC,** Toll, 146 Greene St. *(through March* 10); **CHARMION VON WIEGAND,** Pearl, 420 West Broadway (through March 14); **TROELS WÖRSEL,** Nolan, 560 Broadway (through March 3).

OTHER GALLERIES

Alan Saret—A major retrospective of work in several mediums by Saret—surely one of the strangest artists alive—best known for his ethereal, hanging "pubic" sculptures made of wire mesh. His earlier, figurative drawings *confirm suspicions that the artist is at heart* a "Dionysus in '69" type, while his often enchanting new wall and floor sculptures make wonderfully poetic use of more recently developed mesh-fencing materials. Through March 11. (P.S. 1, 46-01 21st St., Long Island City. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)



Small Works Show—This annual competition, where in the past you could see little, often cutesy versions of everything imaginable, is light on lightness this year, and heavy on collage and Cornell. If there are discoveries *to be made here, the jumbled presentation* prevents your making them. The show does, however, provide a chance to see a selection of work by two hundred and sixty-seven young artists, as "edited" by the art supermarketer Ivan Karp. All in all, it's the closest the legitimate art world gets to the Greenwich Village sidewalk exposition. Through March 9. (80 Washington Square East Galleries, New York University.)

Short List—**GLORIA GARFINKEL,** Ryan, 452 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. *(opens at noon, through* March 10); **LEON GOLUB,** Baer, 270 Lafayette St. (through March 21); **LUCIO POZZI,** Bromm, 90 West Broadway (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through April 30).

PHOTOGRAPHY

THE new exhibition at the Burden Gallery, at 20 East 23rd Street, is educational in the broadest and most pleasurable sense. It is the result of a five-year project, undertaken by Jean-Louis Bourgeois and Carollee Pelos, on the subject of adobes. The color photographs, taken by Pelos, are noteworthy more for their content than for their display of photographic achievement, but that's in keeping with what's rich about this show, which also includes text panels by Bourgeois. (A fuller expression of the project is the Aperture publication "Spectacular Vernacular: The Adobe Tradition.") There is so much cultural information here, and such architectural and decorative brilliance, that one hardly needs to feel the presence of the photographer as a shaper of the material.

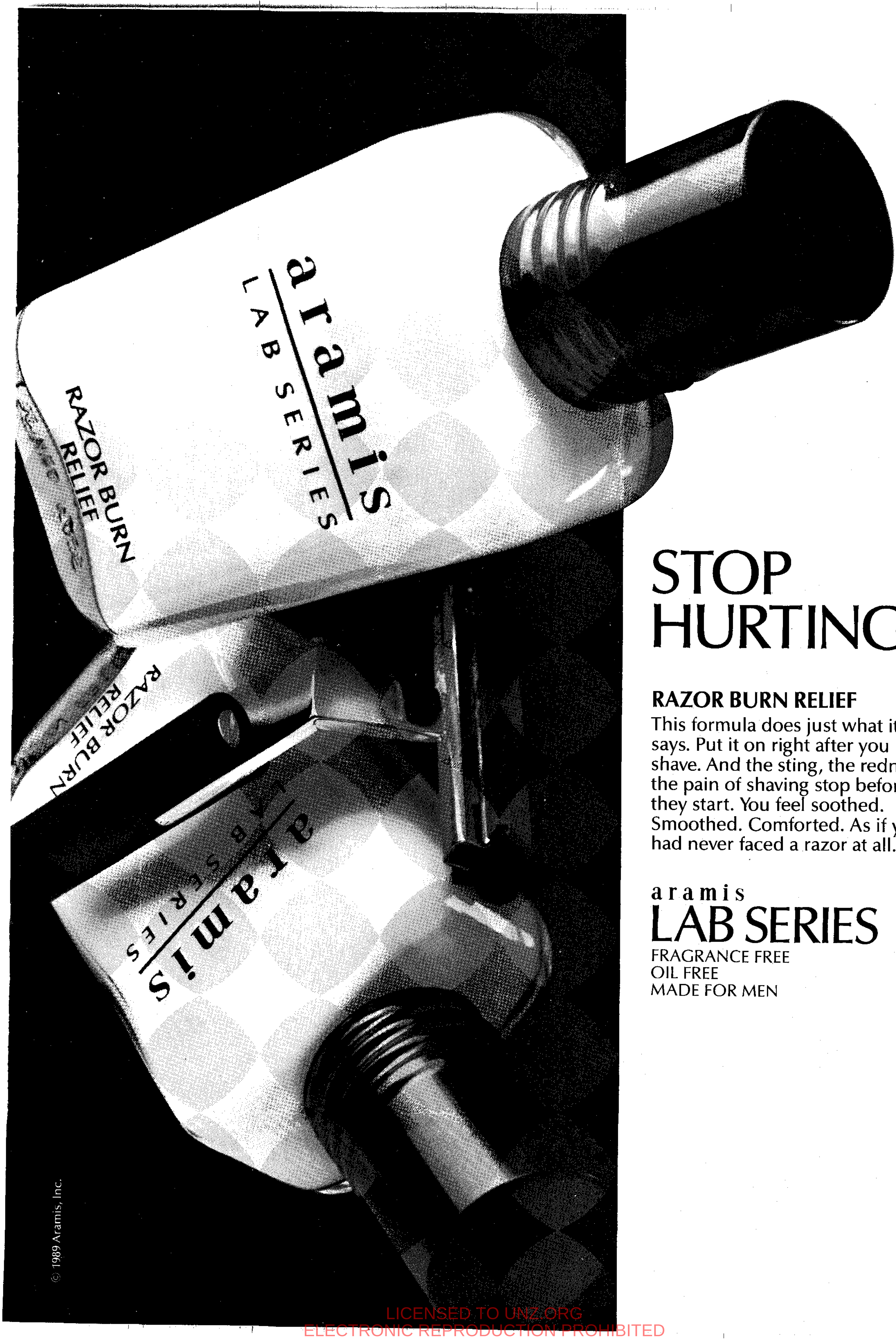
We didn't walk away from the show thinking about Pelos as an artist. Instead, we walked up Park Avenue acutely aware of the verticality of New York, of the glass and the concrete, and of the beeping horns. And we fantasized about going to the places in Africa, India, and Afghanistan that Bourgeois and Pelos show us, where you can't tell at what point landscape stops and architecture begins, where everyday pattern is as exquisite as any patch on a Matisse, and where shade seems to be an oasis —instead of a place where someone might be lurking. Of course, this sounds romantic, but, in fact, as this exhibition indicates, adobe architecture is truly sensible: it makes so many of our notions of progress look ridiculous.

Bernd and Hilla Becher—Sixty-four exquisitely printed black-and-white photographs taken over the past twenty-five years. The images are of familiar-looking exposed industrial structures—gas tanks, grain elevators, water towers—and there is a particularly compelling group of fifteen "Blast Furnaces." Through June 22. (Dia Art Foundation, 548 W. 22nd St. Opens at noon Thursdays through Sundays.)

Adam Fuss—The artist has been doing strong abstract photography for a few years now, and this show is simple and visually stimulating: a perceptual pleasure. At the center of each work is a circular form of white light, intense enough to affect one's eyes. The circles are surrounded by concentric rings soaked in colors that sometimes progress by gradation and other times change into completely new colors. Concentration brings out the beauty in these pieces; scanning them won't offer any rewards. Through March 3. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

"The Indomitable Spirit"—Most of the ninety-four artists represented have created works *specifically for this show*—a photographic response to AIDS. Among the contributors are John Baldessari, Cindy Sherman, Louise Lawler, and Andres Serrano. Through April 7. (International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**ARTHUR LEIPZIG,** Photofind, 138 Spring St. (through March 17); **MARCIA LIPPMAN,** Staley-Wise, 177 Prince St. (opens at *noon, through March 31);* **CAROLLEE PELOS,** Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. (opens at noon, through March 24); **WILLIAM WEGMAN** and **VICTOR SCHRAGER,** Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through March 24).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MUSIC

IN June, 1989, a baritone from Siberia still in his twenties took first place in the Cardiff Singer of the World Competition, and won a good deal more than the contest purse. His recital of songs and arias was telecast by the BBC, and astonishing things began to happen very quickly. Opera houses all over the world rushed to engage Dmitri Hvorostovsky. The Philips label signed him to a multi-record contract and hyped it with a lavish press kit. A London recital was quickly announced, sold out instantly, and had to be repeated by popular demand, even though the program contained nothing but relatively unfamiliar Russian song literature. Francis Rizzo, the former artistic director of the Washington Opera and a Wolf Trap Festival consultant hitherto considered entirely sane by his colleagues, began to devote almost all his free time to making copies of the BBC tape from Cardiff, which he hand-delivered to managers, critics, and opera administrators all over New York and beyond. *Opera News*, which almost never reviews recitals even in its home town, devoted a full page to the event, with a color photo and a review by the dean of British vocal critics, Desmond Shawe-Taylor. *New York*'s music critic, Peter G. Davis, wrote about the video in terms of awe and used the word "centerfold" to describe how he thought Mr. Hvorostovsky looked.

Now the new marvel will appear at Lincoln Center, in an Alice Tully Hall recital sponsored by the Opera Orchestra of New York, on Sunday, March 4. A friend of ours, choosing names carefully, opined that the young man would have to be a combination of Mattia Battistini and Pavel Lisitsian or else he would be a flop. (Battistini was born in 1856 and many people, especially in Russia, considered him the world's greatest baritone in his day. Lisitsian dominated the great baritone parts at the Bolshoi Opera in the nineteen-forties and fifties and has a great following among the handful of Western record collectors who know about him.)

Our native skepticism is somewhat aroused by all the hoopla, but just on the possibility that Mr. Hvorostovsky *is* a combination of Lisitsian and Battistini, we will be at the recital, agog with curiosity.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719. Other box-office numbers are included in the listings.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—DIE ENTFÜHRUNG AUS DEM SERAIL, with Mariella Devia, Barbara Kilduff, Stanford Olsen, and Lars Magnusson; conducted by James Levine. (Feb. 26 and March 2 at 8.) . . . FAUST, a new production, with Barbara Daniels, Neil Shicoff, Thomas Hampson, and James Morris; Charles Dutoit. (Feb. 27 at 8 and March 3 at 1:30.) . . . With Ashley Putnam, Francisco Araiza, Thomas Hampson, and James Morris; Charles Dutoit. (March 7 at 8.) . . . SAMSON ET DALILA, with Shirley Verrett, Gary Lakes, Gregg Baker, and Michael Devlin; Charles Dutoit. (Feb. 28 and March 3 at 8.) . . . MANON LESCAUT, with Mirella Freni, Peter Dvorksy, J. Patrick Raftery, and Italo Tajo; conducted by Nello Santi. (March 1 at 8.) . . . With Mirella Freni, Peter Dvorsky, Brian Schexnayder, and Renato Capecchi; Nello Santi. (March 6 at 8.) . . . OTELLO, with Katia Ricciarelli, Diane Kesling, Placido Domingo, and Justino Díaz; Carlos Kleiber. (March 5 at 8.)

OPERA ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK—Presenting a concert version of Tchaikovsky's "Maid of Orleans," in Russian. With Marvis Martin, soprano; Dolora Zajick, mezzo-soprano; Oleg Kulko, tenor; Jorma Hynninen, baritone; and Sergei Koptchak and Gleb Nikovsky, basses. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 28 at 8.)

BENEFIT CONCERT—Luciano Pavarotti, tenor; Harolyn Blackwell, Leona Mitchell, and Carol Vaness, sopranos; Leo Nucci, baritone; and the New York City Opera Orchestra in a program of arias and other operatic excerpts. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 28 at 9.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—At Avery Fisher Hall, Zubin Mehta conducting. Feb. 27 at 7:30: Works by Haydn, Bruch, Lutoslawski, and Kodály. With Anne-Sophie Mutter, violin. . . . ¶ March 1-3 at 8 and March 6 at 7:30: Four works by Webern and a piano concerto by Beethoven. With Maurizio Pollini, piano.

BROOKLYN PHILHARMONIC—Leon Fleisher conducting a benefit concert. With Emanuel Ax, piano. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 4 at 7:30.)

VIENNA PHILHARMONIC—At Carnegie Hall. March 6 at 8: James Levine conducting Mahler's Third Symphony. With Marilyn Horne, mezzo-soprano; the Westminster Symphonic Choir; and the American Boychoir. . . . ¶ March 7 at 8: Leonard Bernstein conducting Bruckner's Ninth Symphony.

PHILHARMONIA VIRTUOSI—Feb. 27 at 8: Richard Kapp conducting music by Haydn, Britten, Weber, and Karl Dittersdorf. With David Bilger, trumpet; Daniel Goldberg, clarinet; Thomas Young, tenor; and Carolyn Davis, double bass. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824.) . . . ¶ March 2 at 8: Mr. Kapp conducting a Vivaldi-Mozart program. (Triplex, 199 Chambers St. 618-1980.)

NEW AMSTERDAM SYMPHONY—Robert Black conducting a première by Robert Zahab, among other works. With David Buechner, piano. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. March 2 at 8.)

NEW MUSIC ORCHESTRAL PROJECT—Jorge Mester conducting premières by Donald Crockett, Michael Daugherty, and David Liptak. Glen Cortese will conduct a première of his own work. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. March 2 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

NEW YORK CHAMBER SYMPHONY—Gerard Schwarz conducting works by David Diamond, Schubert, Hanson, and Haydn. With John Van Buskirk, piano. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. March 3 at 8 and March 4 at 3.)

MOZART FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA—Baird Hastings conducting. (First Presbyterian Church, Fifth Ave. at 12th St. March 4 at 4:30. Admission by contribution.)

NEW YORK CITY GAY MEN'S CHORUS—Gary Miller directing a benefit performance. With Marilyn Horne, mezzo-soprano. (Carnegie Hall. March 1 at 8.)

CANTICUM NOVUM SINGERS AND BAROQUE ORCHESTRA—Harold Rosenbaum directing Bach's "St. John Passion." With Patrick Romano, tenor; Susanne Peck, soprano; Nancy Wertsch, mezzo-soprano; David Arnold, baritone; Kurt-Owen Richards, bass; and others. (Alice Tully Hall. March 3 at 8.)

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S CHOIR—James Litton directing an all-Brahms program. With Beverly Myers, soprano; Diane Curry, mezzo-soprano; Paul Rowe, baritone; and a full orchestra. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. March 7 at 8. For information about tickets, call 751-1616, ext. 227.)

RECITALS

BARBARA HELD—Flute. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 334-0216. Feb. 27 at 8.)

ST. LUKE'S CHAMBER ENSEMBLE—Playing music by Vittorio Rieti. With Bennett Lerner, piano. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 27 at 8.)

BOSTON CAMERATA—Joel Cohen directing love songs from the Middle Ages. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 28 at 8.)

HEINZ HOLLIGER AND JOHN RITTER—Oboe and piano. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Feb. 28 at 8.)

EROICA TRIO—Performing works by Mozart, Schubert, and Shostakovich. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Feb. 28 at 8.)

Tony Bennett

BETHANY BEARDSLEE AND RICHARD GOODE—Soprano and piano. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. March 1 at 8.)

MUSICIANS' ACCORD—Playing chamber works by Janáček, Jeffrey Miller, Sheila Silver, Richard Kassel, and Amy Rubin. (Florence Gould Hall, French Institute–Alliance Française, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6100. March 1 at 8.)

VERMEER STRING QUARTET—Performing a program of works by Haydn, Bartók, and Schumann. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. March 2 at 8.)

JUILLIARD STRING QUARTET—In the third of six concerts devoted to Beethoven's string quartets. (Alice Tully Hall. March 3 at 3.)

MENDELSSOHN STRING QUARTET—Performing, among other works, the première of a piece by Bruce Adolphe. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 3 at 8.)

GUARNERI QUARTET—March 3 at 8: Playing works by Mozart, Bartók, and Dvořák. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.) . . . ¶ March 5 at 8: Works by Beethoven, Berg, and Sibelius. (Carnegie Hall.)

BORODIN STRING QUARTET—Playing music by Webern, Mozart, and Shostakovich. (Alice Tully Hall. March 4 at 2.)

NADJA SALERNO-SONNENBERG—Violin. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 4 at 3.)

BEETHOVEN SOCIETY—Presenting a program of Beethoven trios; with the Chopin Trio, the Budapest Trio, and the Haydn Trio Vienna. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 4 at 3.)

KEES KOOPER AND MARY LOUISE BOEHM—Violin and piano, performing works by Corelli, Beethoven, Amy Beach, and Liszt. (Broadway Presbyterian Church, Broadway at 114th St. March 4 at 3. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER—Playing works by Beethoven, Babbitt, Carter, Barber, and Schoenberg. With Sanford Sylvan, baritone; Rolf Schulte, violin; Todd Palmer, clarinet; Dennis Smylie, bass clarinet; David Starobin, classical guitarist; Peter Press, mandolin; and artists of the society. (Alice Tully Hall. March 4 at 5 and March 6 at 7:30.)

LOUIS LORTIE—Piano, in an all-Liszt program. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. March 4 at 5.)

DMITRI HVOROSTOVSKY—Baritone. (Alice Tully Hall. March 4 at 8.)

CHAMBER MUSIC CONCERT—With Cho-Liang Lin, violin; Lawrence Dutton, viola; David Finckel, cello; and Yefim Bronfman, piano. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. March 5 at 8.)

RAPHAEL TRIO—With Christine Schadeberg, soprano. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. March 5 at 8.)

WILLIAM BLAINE—Piano. (Weill Recital Hall. March 6 at 8.)

NEW YORK PHILOMUSICA—Playing works by Prokofiev, John Harbison, and Schumann. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 6 at 8.)

North/South Consonance—Playing premières by Orlando Garcia, Charles Mason, and Will Ogdon, among other works. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. March 6 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

American Brass Quintet—With Aleck Karis, piano. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. March 6 at 8.)

Mia Wu—Violin. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. March 6 at 8. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert.)

Jessye Norman—Soprano. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 7 at 8.)

New York Concert Singers—Presenting an all-American program. With Margery Hellmold, soprano; Carl Halvorson, tenor; and Jan Opalach, bass-baritone. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 7 at 8.)

Art of the Early Keyboard—An original-instrument concert of Italian music for guitar and fortepiano. (St. Michael's Church. Amsterdam at 99th St. March 7 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

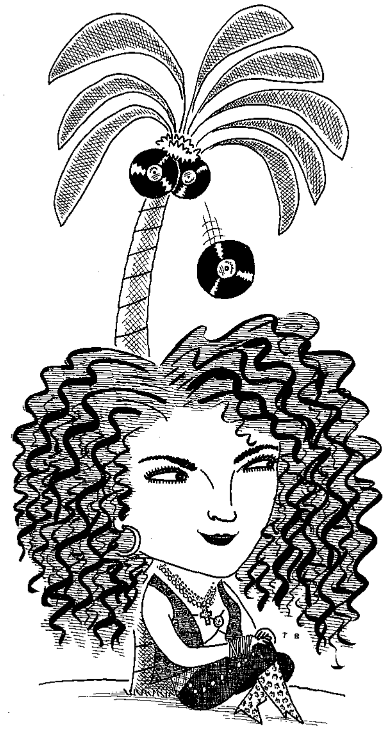
JAZZ / POP / ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

"Highlights in Jazz"—Presenting Dorothy Donegan, a jazz iconoclast who says she took up the piano to avoid housework and whose shows include a fair amount of mugging, foot-stomping, and whirligig Art Tatum-style piano. (Loeb Student Center Auditorium, New York University, Washington Square and LaGuardia Pl. March 1 at 8. For tickets, call 998-4949.)

Tony Bennett—"Once, when I was singing Kurt Weill's 'Lost in the Stars' in the Hollywood Bowl with Basie's band and Buddy Rich on drums, a shooting star went falling through the sky right over my head, and everyone was talking about it, and the next morning the phone rang and it was Ray Charles, who I'd never met, calling from New York. He said, 'Hey, Tony, how'd you do that, man?' and hung up." (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. March 2-3 at 8.)

Gloria Estefan & Miami Sound Machine—Like K.C. & the Sunshine Band, their fellow-Floridian seventies predecessor, Miami Sound Machine churns out the dance-floor hits. (Did somebody say "disco"?) Led by singer Gloria Estefan, M.S.M. provides Latin-tinged pop, and while it isn't exactly message music it does beat "I'm Your Boogie Man." Just maybe, if you let it, the rhythm is gonna get you. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. March 4 at 8. . . . ¶ Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. March 7 at 8.)

Patti LaBelle—Over the top, all of the time, Patti LaBelle rips a song apart, unforgivingly. Bits and pieces of it hit her enthusiastic listeners like shrapnel. She screams, shouts, and shakes her body down to the ground in a frenzy that's almost too painful to see. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. March 7-9 and March 11 at 8, and March 10 at 8 and midnight.)



Gloria Estefan

Louisiana Repertory Jazz Ensemble—John Lewis conducting. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. March 1 at 8.)

American Jazz Orchestra—Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. March 1 at 8. For information about tickets, call 353-4196.

Emmanuel—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. March 2 at 8.

Stephanie Mills—With Christopher Williams. (Radio City Music Hall. March 3 at 8.)

Cleo Laine and John Dankworth—Carnegie Hall. March 4 at 8.

Manhattan Marimba Quartet and Women of the Calabash—Town Hall. March 6 at 8.

Roulette—March 1: James Pugliese. . . . ¶ March 2: Sue Ann Harkey. . . . ¶ March 3: Peter Le Maitre. (228 West Broadway. 219-8242. Evenings at 9.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Rangers—Vs. the Boston Bruins, Feb. 26. . . . ¶ Vs. the Washington Capitals, Feb. 28. . . . ¶ Vs. the Islanders, March 2. . . . ¶ Vs. the Detroit Red Wings, March 5. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Hartford Whalers, March 6 at 7:35.

Devils—Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, March 2. . . . ¶ Vs. the St. Louis Blues, March 6. (Game time, 7:45.)

Knicks—Vs. the Dallas Mavericks, Feb. 27 at 8. . . . ¶ Vs. the Philadelphia 76ers, March 1 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Portland Trail Blazers, March 6 at 7:30.

Nets—Vs. the Atlanta Hawks, March 3. . . . ¶ Vs. the Sacramento Kings, March 5. . . . ¶ Vs. the Los Angeles Clippers, March 7. (Game time, 7:30.) (The Devils and the Nets play at the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-3900; the Rangers and the Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 563-8300; and the Islanders play at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 422-9222.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays and Monday, Feb. 26, at 1; Feb. 26 at 12:30. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights, except Wednesdays, at 8, and Tuesdays at 1. . . . ¶ At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30.

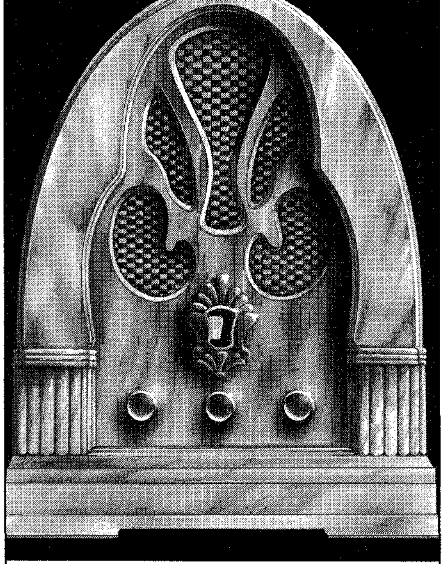
ABOVE AND BEYOND

Cat Show—Fifteen rings full of cat owners and their felines, plus sideshows: lectures on cat nutrition, psychology, and grooming; and booths that sell food and toys for cats. Best-in-show will be chosen Sunday evening, at around 6. (Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. March 2, from 3 to 9; and March 3-4, from 10 to 6.)

Early Bloomers—Spring will be along any minute now—the groundhog didn't spy his furry little shadow—so it's time for the Flower Show. This annual late-winter display of hot-house numbers is sponsored by the Horticultural Society of New York and occupies Pier 92 (where 51st Street meets the Hudson River) March 2-11. Among this year's attractions is a replica of a façade of a thatch-roofed Irish cottage with its adjacent gardens in bloom. (Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 8; Sundays, 10 to 6.)

On the Whiteness of the Whale—A lecture, by Anthony Hecht, on "Moby Dick." (Cathedral House, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. March 7 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Readings—Feb. 28 at 6:30: Anne Meara, Keith Szarabajka, Robert Earl Jones, and Jerry Zaks reading from works by Grace Paley, Bill Franzen, G. K. Wuori, and Frederick Busch. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 93th St. 864-5400.) . . . ¶ Feb. 28 at 8: Laurie Stone reading from her own work. (Shakespeare & Co., Broadway at 81st St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 5 at 8: Mary Robison and Larry Woiwode reading from their own works. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 645-5848.) . . . ¶ March 7 at 8: Dana Gioia reading from his translations of Eugenio Montale's poetry. (Endicott Booksellers, 450 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. No tickets necessary.)



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THE MOVIE HOUSES

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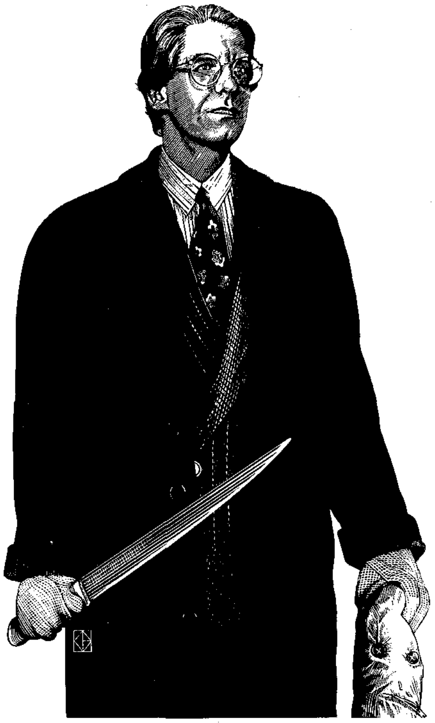
FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 26.



David Cronenberg in "Nightbreed"

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Enemies, A Love Story" (†).
Theatre 2: "Black Rain" (†).
Theatre 3: Films made by Merchant Ivory Productions. Feb. 26: "The Wild Party" (1975, directed by James Ivory), with Raquel Welch, James Coco, David Dukes, and Perry King. . . . ¶ Feb. 27: "The Bostonians" (1984, Ivory), with Christopher Reeve, Vanessa Redgrave, Madeleine Potter, Jessica Tandy, and Linda Hunt. . . . ¶ Feb. 28: "Roseland" (1977, Ivory), with Teresa Wright, Lou Jacobi, Geraldine Chaplin, Helen Gallagher, Lilia Skala, and David Thomas. . . . ¶ March 1: "The Householder" (1963, Ivory), with Sashi Kapoor. . . . ¶ From March 2: "The Perfect Murder" (Zafir Hai).
Theatre 4: Through March 6: "New Year's Day" (Henry Jaglom). From March 7: "The Handmaid's Tale" (Volker Schlöndorff), with Natasha Richardson, Faye Dunaway, Robert Duvall, and Aidan Quinn.
Theatre 5: Through March 1: "Torrents of Spring" (Jerzy Skolimowski), with Timothy Hutton, Nastassja Kinski, and Valeria Golino. From March 2: "Mystery Train" (Jim Jarmusch).
Theatre 6: "Drugstore Cowboy" (†).

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Feb. 27: "The Scarlet Empress" (1934, Joseph von Sternberg), with Marlene Dietrich, Sam Jaffe, and John Lodge.
Feb. 28-March 1: "The Devil Is a Woman" (1935, von Sternberg), with Dietrich, Lionel Atwill, and Cesar Romero.
From March 2: "There's Always Tomorrow" (1956, Douglas Sirk), with Barbara Stanwyck, Fred MacMurray, and Joan Bennett.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Roger & Me" (†).
Theatre 2: "Men Don't Leave" (Paul Brickman), with Jessica Lange.
Theatre 3: "Glory" (†).

Bijou Cinema, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
"Born on the Fourth of July" (†).

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Internal Affairs" (†).
Theatre 2: "Roger & Me" (†).
Theatre 3: "Music Box" (†).
Theatre 4: "Where the Heart Is" (John Boorman), with Dabney Coleman, Uma Thurman, Joanna Cassidy, Crispin Glover, Suzy Amis, Christopher Plummer, and David Hewlett.
Theatre 5: "Glory" (†).
Theatre 6: Through March 1: "Stanley & Iris" (Martin Ritt), with Jane Fonda and Robert De Niro. From March 2: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery, Alec Baldwin, Scott Glenn, Sam Neill, James Earl Jones, Joss Ackland, and Richard Jordan.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"My Left Foot" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Internal Affairs" (†).
Theatre 2: "Madhouse" (Tom Ropelewski), with John Larroquette and Kirstie Alley.
Theatre 3: Through March 1: "Stanley & Iris" (Martin Ritt), with Jane Fonda and Robert De Niro. From March 2: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery and Alec Baldwin.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner, Anthony Quinn, and Madeleine Stowe.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"The Blood of Heroes" (David Peoples), with Rutger Hauer.

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"Roger & Me" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Enemies, A Love Story" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Rosalie Goes Shopping" (Percy Adlon), with Marianne Sägebrecht, Brad Davis, and Judge Reinhold.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 2: "Nightbreed" (Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Music Box" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Born on the Fourth of July" (†).
Theatre 2: "The War of the Roses" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: Through March 6: "Men Don't Leave" (Paul Brickman), with Jessica Lange. From March 7: "The Handmaid's Tale" (Volker Schlöndorff), with Natasha Richardson, Faye Dunaway, Robert Duvall, and Aidan Quinn.
Theatre 2: "Where the Heart Is" (John Boorman), with Dabney Coleman, Uma Thurman, Joanna Cassidy, Crispin Glover, Suzy Amis, Christopher Plummer, and David Hewlett.
Theatre 3: "Stella" (John Erman), with Bette Midler and John Goodman.

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Steel Magnolias" (†).
Theatre 2: "Glory" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner, Anthony Quinn, and Madeleine Stowe.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: Through March 1: "Madhouse" (Tom Ropelewski), with John Larroquette and Kirstie Alley. From March 2: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery and Alec Baldwin. Theatre 2: "Internal Affairs" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Driving Miss Daisy" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Stanley & Iris" (Martin Ritt), with Jane Fonda and Robert De Niro.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Born on the Fourth of July" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: Through March 1: "The War of the Roses" (†). From March 2: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery and Alec Baldwin.
Theatre 2: "Nightbreed" (Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 2: "Stella" (John Erman), with Bette Midler and John Goodman.

WEST SIDE

Bleecker Street Cinema I and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: "Labyrinth of Passion" (1982, directed by Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish).
Theatre 2: "Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Music Box" (†).
Theatre 2: "Nightbreed" (Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"Driving Miss Daisy" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Born on the Fourth of July" (†).
Theatre 2: "Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner, Anthony Quinn, and Madeleine Stowe.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Stella" (John Erman), with Bette Midler and John Goodman.
Theatre 2: "Where the Heart Is" (John Boorman), with Dabney Coleman, Uma Thurman, Joanna Cassidy, Crispin Glover, Suzy Amis, Christopher Plummer, and David Hewlett.
Theatre 3: "Henry V" (†).
Theatre 4: "Speaking Parts" (Atom Egoyan).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Born on the Fourth of July" (†).
Theatre 2: "Steel Magnolias" (†).
Theatre 3: "Rosalie Goes Shopping" (Percy Adlon), with Marianne Sägebrecht, Brad Davis, and Judge Reinhold.
Theatre 4: "The War of the Roses" (†).
Theatre 5: "Enemies, A Love Story" (†).
Theatre 6: "Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 7: "Driving Miss Daisy" (†).
Theatre 8: "Men Don't Leave" (Paul Brickman), with Jessica Lange.
Theatre 9: "Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†).
Theatre 2: Through March 6: (Matinées only) "Courage Mountain" (Christopher Leitch), with Juliette Caton, Charlie Sheen, Leslie Caron, and Jan Rubeš; and (evenings only) "The Blood of Heroes" (David Peoples), with Rutger Hauer. From March 7: "The Handmaid's Tale" (Volker Schlöndorff), with Natasha Richardson, Faye Dunaway, Robert Duvall, and Aidan Quinn.
Theatre 3: "Nightbreed" (Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Driving Miss Daisy" (†).
Theatre 2: "Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner.
Theatre 3: "Field of Dreams" (Phil Alden Robinson), with Kevin Costner, Ray Liotta, Amy Madigan, James Earl Jones, Burt Lancaster, Dwier Brown, and Gaby Hoffman.
Theatre 4: "The Fabulous Baker Boys" (†).
Theatre 5: "Music Box" (†).
Theatre 6: "Shirley Valentine" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Where the Heart Is" (John Boorman), with Dabney Coleman.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Mountains of the Moon" (Bob Rafelson), with Patrick Bergin and Iain Glen.

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Henry V" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Roger & Me" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Enemies, A Love Story" (†).

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"Crimes and Misdemeanors" (†)

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Camille Claudel" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Driving Miss Daisy" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Stanley and Iris" (Martin Ritt), with Jane Fonda and Robert De Niro.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner, Anthony Quinn, and Madeleine Stowe.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "My Left Foot" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sweetie" (Jane Campion).
Theatre 3: "The Plot Against Harry" (Michael Roemer).

Cinema Studio 1 and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: Through March 1: "Mystery Train" (Jim Jarmusch). From March 2: "Too Beautiful for You" (Bertrand Blier; in French), with Gérard Depardieu, Josiane Balasko, and Carole Bouquet.
Theatre 2: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Time of the Gypsies" (Emir Kusturica; in Romany).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Men Don't Leave" (Paul Brickman), with Jessica Lange.
Theatre 2: Through March 1: "Madhouse" (Tom Ropelewski), with John Larroquette and Kirstie Alley. From March 2: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery and Alec Baldwin.
Theatre 3: "Driving Miss Daisy" (†).
Theatre 4: "Internal Affairs" (†).
Theatre 5: "Glory" (†).
Theatre 6: "Where the Heart Is" (John Boorman), with Dabney Coleman, Uma Thurman, Joanna Cassidy, Crispin Glover, Suzy Amis, Christopher Plummer, and David Hewlett.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Born on the Fourth of July" (†).
Theatre 2: "Nightbreed" (Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 2: "The Blood of Heroes" (David Peoples), with Rutger Hauer.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Glory" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Blood of Heroes" (directed by David Peoples), with Rutger Hauer.
Theatre 3: "Nightbreed" (Clive Barker), with David Cronenberg.
Theatre 4: "The White Girl" (James Cannady).
Theatre 5: "Tango and Cash" (Andrei Konchalovsky), with Sylvester Stallone and Kurt Russell.
Theatre 6: Through March 1: "The War of the Roses" (†). From March 2: "Basket Case 2."

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"Madhouse" (Tom Ropelewski), with John Larroquette and Kirstie Alley

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: "The Little Mermaid" (†).
Theatre 3: "Stella" (John Erman), with Bette Midler and John Goodman.
Theatre 4: "Internal Affairs" (†).

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
Through March 1: "Heart Condition" (James D. Parriott), with Bob Hoskins, Denzel Washington, and Chloe Webb.
From March 2: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery, Alec Baldwin, Scott Glenn, Sam Neill, James Earl Jones, Joss Ackland, and Richard Jordan.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Born on the Fourth of July" (†).
Theatre 2: "Revenge" (Tony Scott), with Kevin Costner, Anthony Quinn, and Madeleine Stowe.

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)
"Drugstore Cowboy" (†).

In 1931, David O. Selznick persuaded King Vidor to direct the South Seas melodrama "Bird of Paradise" by saying he could do whatever he wanted about the absurd plot—as long as he included three big love scenes and ended with Dolores Del Rio leaping into a volcano. Vidor envisioned shooting the movie in Hawaii "with an absolutely mobile unit, where you could ride around or go to another island and if you saw something that looked good, you just stop and shoot there." Unfortunately, the crew was too large, the equipment too unwieldy, the weather too fierce. So after five weeks he finished up on Catalina Island, inside a water tank in Burbank, and in a primitive village built in Culver City.

Yet, amazingly, the finished film, about an American boat hand (Joel McCrea) who falls in love with the island siren, played by Del Rio, has the seat-of-the-pants lyricism of Vidor's initial vision. From the opening scene, of a yacht slicing through breakers and squeaking through a difficult passage, to the piercingly sweet sequence of Del Rio sucking the juice from an orange and kissing it into her ailing lover's mouth, the movie's sensuality transcends the rickety script about racial taboos and the wrath of a volcano god. Max Steiner's initial full-length movie score, one of the first written by any composer for the talkies, is sweeping and lilting; Busby Berkeley's choreography of native dances is bold without becoming ludicrous. The dialogue is forced and punny, but the movie never quite gets embarrassing. At its worst—and best—"Bird of Paradise" (which is playing March 7 at Theatre 80 St. Marks) is like a reverie dreamed up by a love-starved teen-ager at a coed summer camp.

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal.
Theatre 2: "Hard to Kill."

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Feb. 26: "Barocco" (1978, directed by André Téchiné; in French), with Isabelle Adjani, Gérard Depardieu, and Marie-France Pisier; and "Vincent, François, Paul, and the Others" (1974, Claude Sautet; in French), with Yves Montand, Michel Piccoli, Serge Reggiani, and Depardieu.
Feb. 27-28: "Choice of Arms" (1981), Alain Corneau; in French), with Yves Montand, Gérard Depardieu and Catherine Deneuve; and "One Woman or Two" (1987, Daniel Vigne; in English and French), with Depardieu, Sigourney Weaver, and Ruth Westheimer.
March 1-3: "Last Tango in Paris" (1972, Bernardo Bertolucci; in French and English), with Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider; and "The Last Woman" (1976, Marco Ferreri; in French), with Gérard Depardieu and Ornella Muti.
March 4-6: "Yojimbo" (1961) and "Sanjuro" (1963), both films in Japanese, directed by Akira Kurosawa, with Toshiro Mifune.
March 7: "The Idiot" (†).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through Feb. 27: "Witness for the Prosecution" (1958, Billy Wilder), with Tyrone Power, Marlene Dietrich and Charles Laughton; and "Stalag 17" (1953, Wilder), with William Holden, Don Taylor, Otto Preminger, and Robert Strauss.
Feb. 28-March 1: "Now, Voyager" (1942, Irving Rapper), with Bette Davis, Paul Henreid, Claude Raines, and John Loder; and "The Letter" (1940, William Wyler), with Davis, Herbert Marshall, James Stephenson, Frieda Inescort, and Gale Sondergaard.
March 2-3: "Tropic of Cancer" (†) and "Breathless" (†).
March 4: "The Family" (1988, Ettore Scola; in Italian), with Vittorio Gassman, Fanny Ardant, Stefania Sandrelli, and Philippe Noiret; and "Good Morning, Babylon" (†).
March 5-6: "Hardcore" (†); and "Taxi Driver" (1976, Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Harvey Keitel, Cybill Shepherd, and Jodie Foster.
From March 7: "Time Bandits" (†); and "Monty Python's The Meaning of Life" (1983, Terry Jones).

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)
Through Feb. 27: "White Heat" (1949, Raoul Walsh), with James Cagney, Virginia Mayo, Edmond O'Brien, and Margaret Wycherly; and "Come Fill the Cup" (1951, Gordon Douglas), with Cagney, Phyllis Thaxter, and Raymond Massey.
Feb. 28-March 1: "The Conformist" (1970, Bernardo Bertolucci; in Italian), with Jean-Louis Trintignant, Stefania Sandrelli, and Dominique Sanda; and "Mafioso" (1964, Alberto Lattuada; in Italian), with Alberto Sordi.
March 2-3: "Jean de Florette" (1985, Claude Berri; in French), with Yves Montand, Gérard Depardieu, and Elisabeth Depardieu; and "Manon of the Spring" (1987, Berri; in French), with Montand, Daniel Auteuil, and Emmanuelle Béart.
March 4: "Les Enfants Terribles" (†); and "Testament of Orpheus" (1962, Jean Cocteau; in French).
March 5-6: "Detour" (1945, Edgar G. Ulmer), with Ann Savage and Tom Neal; "Strange Illusion" (1945, Ulmer), with Jimmy Lydon and Sally Eilers; and "Bluebeard" (1945, Ulmer), with John Carradine and Jean Parker.
From March 7: "Meet John Doe" (1941, Frank Capra), with Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck, and Edward Arnold; and "Made for Each Other" (1939, John Cromwell), with Carole Lombard, James Stewart, and Charles Coburn.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Feb. 26: "One Wonderful Sunday" (1947, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese); and "Horse" (1941, Kajiro Yamamoto; in Japanese).
Feb. 27: "Young and Innocent" ("The Girl Was Young"; 1937, Alfred Hitchcock), with Derrick de Marney, Nova Pilbeam, Basil Radford, Percy Marmont, and Mary Clare; and "Murder" (1930, Hitchcock), with Herbert Marshall and Norah Baring.
Feb. 28: "The Damned" (1969, Luchino Visconti), with Dirk Bogarde, Ingrid Thulin, and Helmut Berger; and "The Innocent" (1976, Visconti; in Italian), with Giancarlo Giannini, Laura Antonelli, and Jennifer O'Neill.
March 1: "How to Marry a Millionaire" (1953, Jean Negulesco), with Marilyn Monroe, Betty Grable, Lauren Bacall, William Powell, Cameron Mitchell, David Wayne, Rory Calhoun, Alex D'Arcy, and Fred Clark; and "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" (1953, Howard Hawks), with Jane Russell, Marilyn Monroe, Charles Coburn, Tommy Noonan, Norma Varden, Elliott Reid, and George Wilson.
March 2-3: "Dinner at Eight" (†); and "The Women" (1939, George Cukor), with Norma Shearer, Rosalind Russell, Joan Crawford, Paulette Goddard, Mary Boland, Joan Fontaine, Lucile Watson, Phyllis Povah, Virginia Weidler, Ruth Hussey, Margaret Dumont and Marjorie Main.
March 4: "The Big Heat" (†); and "Beyond a Reasonable Doubt" (1956, Fritz Lang), with Dana Andrews and Joan Fontaine.
March 5: "La Rupture" (1970, Claude Chabrol; in French), with Stéphane Audran, Jean-Pierre Cassel, and Michel Bouquet; and "Ophélia" (1962, Chabrol; in French), with André Jocelyn and Juliette Mayniel.
March 6: "Bulldog Drummond Comes Back" (1937, Louis King) and "Bulldog Drummond's Peril" (1939, James Hogan), both with John Howard as Drummond.
March 7: "Salome, Where She Danced" (1945, Charles Lamont), with Yvonne De

MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Carlo, Rod Cameron, Albert Dekker, and Walter Slezak; and "Bird of Paradise" (1932, King Vidor), with Dolores Del Rio and Joel McCrea.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)

THEATRE 1: Feb. 26-27 and March 1-2 at 2:30 and 6: Four different programs of Academy Award-nominated films for feature-length documentary. . . . ¶ March 3 at 2:30: "The Hunters" (1977, directed by Théo Angelopoulos; in Greek). . . . ¶ March 4 at 2:30: "The Travelling Players" (1975, Angelopoulos; in Greek). . . . ¶ March 5-6 at 2:30 and 6: Academy Award-nominated films for foreign-language feature film.

THEATRE 2: Feb. 27 at 3: "Beyond a Reasonable Doubt" (1956, Fritz Lang), with Dana Andrews and Joan Fontaine. . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 6: "Picture Snatcher" (1933, Lloyd Bacon), with James Cagney, Ralph Bellamy, and Alice White. . . . ¶ March 1 at 6: "Reconstruction" (1970, Théo Angelopoulos; in Greek). . . . ¶ March 2 at 6: "Days of '36" (1972, Angelopoulos; in Greek). . . . ¶ March 3 at 5:30: Wartime propaganda films of the Third Reich, 1940-41.

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"MB Playhouse," a chance to see the television dramas you may have missed in the past thirty or so years. Feb. 27-March 3: Katherine Anne Porter's "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" (1980, Randa Haines; PBS), with Geraldine Fitzgerald and Lois Smith. . . . From March 6: Harold Brodkey's "Love and Other Sorrows" (1989, Steven Gomer; PBS), with Elizabeth Franz, Stephen Mailer, and Haviland Morris; and John Updike's "The Music School" (1977, John Korty; PBS), with Ron Weyand. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 3. . . . ¶ "Twenty Years of Monty Python." From Feb. 27: An episode from "The Complete and Utter History of Britain" (1969, London Weekend Television), written by, and starring, Michael Palin and Terry Jones. Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15. . . . ¶ "Laurence Olivier: The Television Legacy." Feb. 27-March 3: "The Power and the Glory" (1961, Marc Daniels), with Olivier. . . . From March 6: Two interviews with Olivier, one by Kenneth Tynan (1966, BBC), the other by Elliott Norton (1967, NET). Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6, Wednesdays through Fridays at 3, and Saturdays at 1.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—In the Riklis Theatre. Films directed by John Ford. Feb. 28 at 2:30: "Young Mr. Lincoln" (1939), with Henry Fonda, Alice Brady, Marjorie Weaver, and Arleen Whelan. . . . March 1 at 2:30: "Sergeant Rutledge" (1960), with Jeffrey Hunter, Constance Towers, Woody Strode, and Billie Burke. . . . March 2 at 2:30: "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance" (1962), with James Stewart, John Wayne, Vera Miles, and Lee Marvin. . . . ¶ Films directed by Mike Nichols. March 3 at 1: "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" (1966), with Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, George Segal, and Sandy Dennis. . . . March 3 at 3:30: "Television Appearances: Mike Nichols and Elaine May," a fifty-five minute compilation, all from 1959-60. . . . March 3 at 5: "The Graduate" (1967), with Anne Bancroft, Dustin Hoffman, and Katharine Ross. . . . March 4 at 1: "Catch-22" (1970), with Alan Arkin, Martin Balsam, Richard Benjamin, and Arthur Garfunkel. . . . March 4 at 3:30: "Television Appearances: Mike Nichols and Elaine May." . . . March 4 at 5: "Carnal Knowledge" (1971), with Jack Nicholson, Garfunkel, and Ann-Margret. . . . March 7 at 1: "Television Appearances: Mike Nichols and Elaine May." . . . March 7 at 2:30: "The Graduate."

Anthology Film Archives, 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Films showing in either the Jonas Mekas Theatre or the Maya Deren Theatre. Feb. 28 at 7 and 9, and March 1-4 and March 7 at 6:45 and 8: "To Protect Mother Earth (Broken Treaty II)" (1989, Joel L. Freedman), a documentary, narrated by Robert Redford. . . . ¶ March 1 at 7: "Nice Colored Girls" (1987, Tracey Moffet) and "A Song of Ceylon" (1985, Laleen Jayamanne). . . . ¶ March 1 at 9: "Measures of Distance" (1988, Mona Hatoum), "Sari Red" (1988, Pratibha Parmar), "The Hidden Wisdom" (1988, Patricia Diaz and Michelle McIntosh), "Coffee Colored Children" (1988, Ngozi Onwurah), and "Flesh and Paper" (1990, Parmar). . . . ¶ March 2 at 7: "Surname Viet Given Name Nam" (1989, Trinh T. Minh-ha). . . . ¶ March 2 at 9: "Cycles" (1989, Zeinabu Davis), "Juxta" (1989, Hiroko Yamazaki), "Two Lies" (1989, Pam Tom), and "Illusions" (1982, Julie Dash). . . . ¶ March 3 at 5: "Kotva Cinema, Prague, 21 November 1930," a program of six short films. . . . ¶ March 3 at 7: "The Searchers" (1956, John Ford), with John Wayne. . . . ¶ March 4 at 4:30: "Kotva Cinema, Prague, 13 February 1931," a program of five short films. . . . ¶ March 4 at 9: "Kotva Cinema, Prague, 16 January 1931," a program of five short films. . . . ¶ March 7 at 7: "Zvenigora" (1928, Alexander Dovzhenko; silent). . . . ¶ March 7 at 9: "Michael" (1924, Carl Theodor Dreyer; silent).

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—March 2 at 6:30: "Dancing Girl of Izu" (1933, Heinosuke Gosho; in Japanese) and "The Neighbor's Wife and Mine" (1931, Gosho; in Japanese).

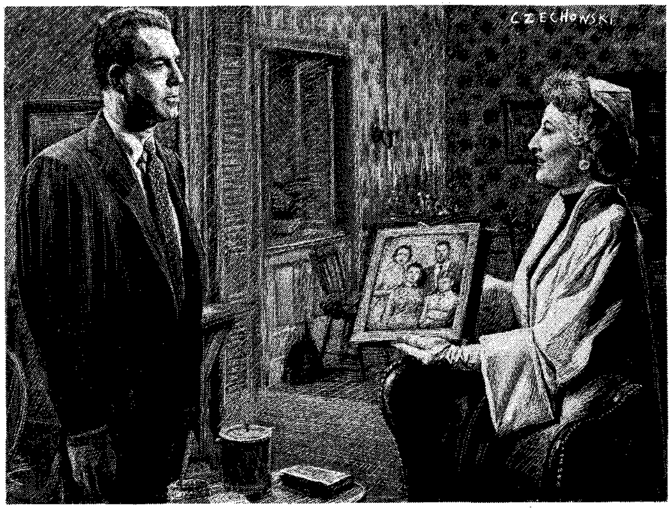
IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

The Big Heat (1953)—Sidney Boehm's solid, hard-nosed script might have been made into a routine cops-and-robbers thriller, but the director, Fritz Lang, gave it a formalized style. The movie is all of a piece; it's designed in light and shadows, and its underworld atmosphere glistens with the possibilities of sadism. This is a definitive film noir, with a few stunningly choreographed nasty scenes. Glenn Ford is Dave Bannion, a police lieutenant who ignores the orders of his superiors and investigates a big-time gangster (Alexander Scourby). A bomb is planted in Bannion's car, and his wife (Jocelyn Brando) is blown up. Full of hate, Bannion leaves the department to find revenge. When one of the gangster's henchmen (Lee Marvin) throws scalding coffee at his mistress, a high-living tough-girl lush (Gloria Grahame), and she wants vengeance, too, she joins up with Bannion. And the film accumulates corpses and arrests. With Carolyn Jones and Dan Seymour. From a novel by William P. McGivern—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; March 4.)

Black Rain—The most surprising thing about this film, which tells the story of a family of survivors of the atomic-bomb attack on Hiroshima, is that it isn't depressing. It's too intelligent; every scene is drenched in irony. The director, Shohei Imamura, treats the bombing itself with telling poetic concision, as a series of awful tableaux flashing before us with the speed of memory. Then, abruptly, he cuts to a tranquil-looking country scene and a very different kind of story. It's five years later, and the Shizuma family, last seen making their way through the wreckage of the city, now live in a remote village and are preoccupied with a traditional problem of Japanese movie families: arranging a marriage. This leisurely rural existence is restful in only the most superficial ways: two members of the family suffer from radiation sickness and have been ordered not to work hard. The Shizumas live in a perpetual state of suspension, a constant twilight; their survival is more like a wary, static persistence. We're unsure how to respond; we've never seen a family drama quite like this. Imamura's film looks at times like one of Yasujiro Ozu's dignified formal movies about middle-class problems, but the life of the Shizumas is Ozu's world seen in a very dark looking glass. The film's tone is analytical and distanced. Imamura has transformed this Hiroshima story into a Sartrean soap opera. With Yoshiko Tanaka, Kazuo Kitamura, and Etsuko Ichihara. The screenplay, by Imamura and Toshiro Ishido, is based on a novel by Masuji Ibuse. Superb black-and-white cinematography by Takashi Kawamata; a harrowingly beautiful score by Toru Takemitsu. In Japanese.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/26/90.) (Angelika Film Center.)



At the Public Theatre, Fred MacMurray and Barbara Stanwyck in "There's Always Tomorrow"

Born on the Fourth of July—An antiwar epic, it's like one of those commemorative issues of *Life*. This one covers 1956 to 1976, and the counterculture is presented in a nostalgic, aesthetically reactionary way: it's made part of our certified public memories. The director, Oliver Stone, plays bumper cars with the camera and uses cutting to jam you into the action, and you can't even enjoy his uncouthness, because it's put at the service of sanctimony. The pure of heart, Catholic and patriotic hero Ron Kovic (Tom Cruise) thinks war is how he'll prove himself a man. He joins the Marine Corps and is sent to Vietnam; in 1968, his spine is severed, and he's left in a wheelchair, paralyzed from the chest down. The movie is a scream of rage at how he was betrayed, mutilated, neglected; it's also an uplifting account of how he boozed, quarrelled with everyone, and despaired until he stopped being contemptuous of the war protesters and became active in Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Overblown right from the start, this story is constructed as a series of blackout episodes that suggest the Stations of the Cross; rising strings alert you to the heavy stuff. Then the finale—Resurrection—takes Ron into white light, and John Williams lays on the trumpets. The script, by Stone and Kovic, is based on Kovic's autobiography. With Willem Dafoe, Tom Berenger, Raymond J. Barry as the gentle father, Caroline Kava as the castrating Mom, Kyra Sedgwick as Donna, and Abbie Hoffman.—P.K. (1/22/90) (Bijou Cinema, Baronet, U. A. East, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin.)

Breathless (1959)—Jean-Luc Godard's first feature—a witty, romantic, innovative chase picture with the twenty-six-year-old Jean-Paul Belmondo as a Parisian hood, and Jean Seberg as the

American girl who casually lives with him and just as casually turns him in to the police when he becomes an inconvenience. Godard, who dedicated this film (made for $90,000) to Monogram Pictures, saw something in the cheap American gangster movies of his youth that French movies lacked; he poeticized it and made it so modern (via fast jump cutting) that he, in turn, became the key influence on American movies of the sixties. Here, he brought together disharmonious elements—irony and slapstick and defeat—and brought the psychological effects of moviegoing into the movie itself. (His hero was probably the first to imitate Bogart.) The film is light and playful and off-the-cuff, even a little silly. Yet the giddy, gauche characters, who don't give a damn—the hood who steals a car, kills a highway patrolman, and chases after some money that is owed him for past thefts so he and his impervious, passively butch girl can get to Italy—are not only familiar in an exciting, revealing way, they are terribly *attractive*. In French.—P.K. (Cinema Village; March 2-3.)

Camille Claudel—She lived, she loved, she sculpted, she went nuts. Bruno Nuytten's first film is a de-luxe biography of a nearly forgotten (but attractive!) artist who studied with the great Rodin, became his assistant and lover, and then struggled to break free of his influence and discover her own identity as a sculptor. Willful (and comely) as she is, Camille never manages to shake her obsession with Rodin, and she makes a mess of her life and her career. This is rich material, but the movie is a real chore to sit through: it's two and a half hours long, and the pace is sluggish. Nuytten, a superb cinematographer ("French Provincial," "Barocco"), doesn't seem to know how to tell a story—not one as complex as this, anyway. Isabelle Adjani plays Camille (there are obvious similarities to her role in "The Story of Adèle H.") with terrific abandon and intensity, yet the performance isn't satisfying; the film is so poorly shaped as drama that even her most striking moments seem to come out of nowhere. Also with Gérard Depardieu as Rodin, Laurent Grevill as Paul Claudel (Camille's younger brother, who became a well-known writer), and Alain Cuny. The script, by Nuytten and Marilyn Goldin, is based on a biography by Reine-Marie Paris. In French.—T.R. (Paris.)

Crimes and Misdemeanors—Written and directed by Woody Allen, it's a sad, censuring look at an eminent ophthalmologist (Martin Landau) and other crooks in high places who (in Allen's view) have convinced themselves that they can do anything, because they don't think God is watching. Allen is making the film equivalent of a play of ideas, and the ideas have no excitement. He's telling us not just what we already know but what we've already rejected. Woody Allen himself plays a little, grubbing-for-a-living documentary filmmaker who falls in love but can't compete for the woman (Mia Farrow) against a darling of the media, a tall, egomaniacal TV producer played with a wonderfully smug, screwy abandon by Alan Alda. Except for Alda, and Landau (when he's showing nervous impatience), and Jerry Orbach, who plays the ophthalmologist's shady brother, most of the large cast is proficient yet brittle and dull. With Sam Waterston (as a rabbi who's going blind), Anjelica Huston, Claire Bloom, Joanna Gleason, Caroline Aaron, Nora Ephron in a bit, and Daryl Hannah—uncredited, but looking so luscious she almost stops the show. The bland cinematography is by Sven Nykvist.—P.K. (10/30/89) (Bleecker Street Cinema, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Carnegie Screening Room.)

Dinner at Eight (1933)—Jean Harlow, with her bee-stung pucker and her tinny voice, at her comic best. George Cukor directed this witty, much improved version of the Edna Ferber–George S. Kaufman play, with a big-gun cast that includes Marie Dressler, John Barrymore, Lee Tracy, Wallace Beery, and Edmund Lowe. Among the people who toned up the dialogue were Herman J. Mankiewicz and Donald Ogden Stewart.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; March 2-3.)

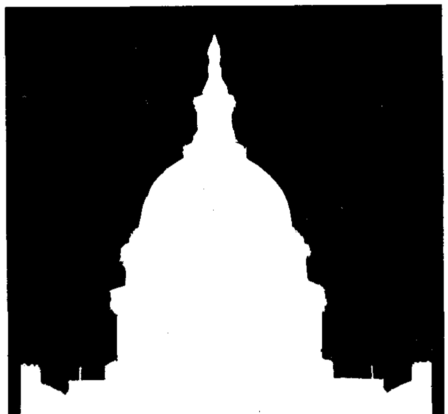
Driving Miss Daisy—Alfred Uhry's adaptation of his much honored play is still full of manipulative bits—it's virtually all manipulative bits—but the director, Bruce Beresford, understands how to work them while cutting down on their obviousness. Set in Atlanta, starting in 1948, the movie is the story of the companionship that develops between stubborn, suspicious Miss Daisy (Jessica Tandy), a wealthy Jewish widow of seventy-two, and her resilient chauffeur, Hoke (Morgan Freeman), a widower about a decade younger than she is. Essentially, it's about how he changes her. He's made upright, considerate, humane—he's made perfect—so that nothing will disturb our appreciation of the gentle, bittersweet reverie we're watching. But it's acted (and directed) eloquently. Tandy and Freeman achieve a beautiful equilibrium. And Dan Aykroyd comes through with a fine performance as Miss Daisy's good-old-boy son. With Esther Rolle and Patti LuPone.—P.K. (12/25/89) (68th St. Playhouse, 8th St. Playhouse, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Cinema 3, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Drugstore Cowboy—Nihilistic humor rarely bubbles up in a movie as freely as it does here. Set in Portland, Oregon, in 1971, the story is about two couples who live together and travel around the Pacific Northwest robbing hospitals and pharmacies, grabbing fistfuls of pills and capsules. They're like a junkie version of Clyde Barrow's gang. The director, Gus Van Sant, takes us inside a lot of underground attitudes: the druggies are monomaniacal about leading an aimless existence—they see themselves as romantic figures. They're comic, but they're not put down for being comic. The picture keeps you laughing because it's so nonjudgmental. Van Sant is half in and half out of the desire of adolescents to remain kids forever. As the gang's twenty-six-year-old leader, Matt Dillon brings the role a light self-mockery that helps set the tone of the film, and Kelly Lynch is strikingly effective as the leader's wife. Also with James Le Gros, Heather Graham, James Remar, Max Perlich, Beah Richards, Grace Zabriskie, and William Burroughs. The script, by the director and Daniel Yost, was based on an unpublished novel by James Fogle, who's in prison for drug-related robberies.—P.K. (10/30/89) (Angelika Film Center, and Warner.)

Enemies, A Love Story—Emotionally overwhelming. Adapted from Isaac Bashevis Singer's New York City novel, set in 1949—a post-Holocaust sex farce in which three passionately jealous women are in love with a guilt-ridden, self-effacing man. The director, Paul Mazursky, has gathered a superbly balanced cast and kept the action so smooth that the viewer is carried along on a tide of mystical slyness. Ron Silver is the Polish-Jewish intellectual who survived the Final Solution by hiding in a hayloft. Margaret Sophie Stein is the Gentile peasant (now his wife) who risked her life to take care of him. Lena Olin is his diabolically willful mistress, a survivor of the camps. Anjelica Huston is the wife (with an erotic aura) he thought was killed by the Nazis. This richly satisfying movie is restrained, yet it has its own deeply crazy turmoil. Mazursky pulls the rug out from under us, and we drop through the farce. With Alan King, Judith Malina, Phil Leeds, and Mazursky. The script is by Roger L. Simon and the director.—P.K. (12/25/89) (Angelika Film Center, Gotham Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

Les Enfants Terribles (1949, "The Strange Ones")—The director, Jean-Pierre Melville, expands Cocteau's novel about the shared disorder and confused narcissism of a brother and sister into a baroque tragicomedy. The movie glides along, gathering intensity, as the characters move—compulsively, as in a dream—toward self-destruction. With Nicole Stéphane, fiercely elegant as the dominating Elisabeth; Edouard Dermithe as Paul; Renée Cosima as Dargelos and Agatha; Jacques Bernard as Gérard. Almost voluptuous in its evocation of temperament and atmosphere, this film was shot, on a shoestring, in "real" settings—the director's flat, the lobby of the *Petit Journal*, the stage of the Théâtre Pigalle. When Melville was ill, Cocteau directed the summer beach scene in Montmorency, under snow. Cocteau also provides cryptic, emblematic narration. The score (Bach-Vivaldi) is one of the rare effective film usages of great music. In French.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; March 4.)

The Fabulous Baker Boys—Two lounge pianists (brothers, played by Beau and Jeff Bridges) add a vocalist (Michelle Pfeiffer) to their act, and she changes their lives. This romantic fantasy has a forties-movie sultriness and an eighties movie-struck melancholy. Put them together and you have a movie in which eighties glamour is being defined. The young writer-director Steve Kloves trips off your



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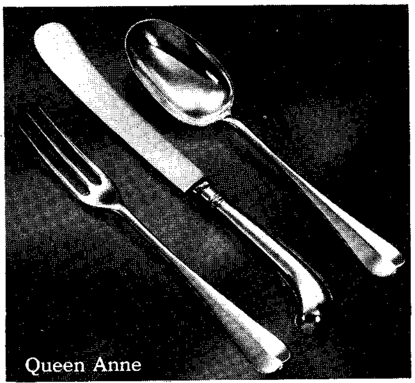

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bluesy, narcissistic feelings about popular music and commercial-movie emotions; he invites you to laugh if you want to. (You feel the heat even if you're laughing.) The three stars seem perfect at what they're doing—newly minted icons. When Pfeiffer (who does her own singing) delivers "Makin' Whoopee," while crawling over a grand piano like a long-legged kitty-cat, she rivals Rita Hayworth in "Gilda."—P.K. (10/16/89) (Worldwide Cinemas.)

Glory—This Civil War epic, based on fiery, spirit-stirring material that has never before been tapped for the movies, is emotionally moving even when the scenes falter. The 54th Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry was the first black fighting unit to be formed in the North, and the white colonel in command of the effort to prove that black men had the discipline and valor to stand up against the enemy was Robert Gould Shaw, the twenty-five-year-old son of abolitionists. As the small, sad-faced Shaw, Matthew Broderick shows us the misery of a softhearted commanding officer who is determined to prepare his men for what's ahead. Denzel Washington, Morgan Freeman, and Andre Braugher are the usual representative group of enlistees who bicker and quarrel before they shape up and become fine soldiers, but the actors perform the roles as if they've never been played before. Although the script is a conventional melodrama, the director, Edward Zwick, has made something more thoughtful than that. He doesn't have the instinct for images that would burst the written framework, but he's made a good film on a great subject. The screenplay, based partly on Shaw's letters, is by Kevin Jarre. With Jihmi Kennedy.—P.K. (2/5/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Good Morning, Babylon (1987)—The first film made in English by the Taviani brothers tells the story of two teen-age Tuscan workmen (Vincent Spano and Joaquim de Almeida), from a family of church builders and restorers, who go off to seek their fortune in the New World. Eventually they find jobs as plasterers in San Francisco, working on the Italian Pavilion of the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition, and then in Hollywood, working for D. W. Griffith (Charles Dance), building the elephants for the Babylonian set of "Intolerance." But it takes them too dismally long to get to the West Coast: the film's poetic, storybook style slumps into masochism during their hardships in this country, when they work at bizarre, humiliating jobs along the way. And even after they reach L.A. and meet the people associated with Griffith they seem pitiable, and it takes forever (and more humiliation) before the great man gives them the nod. There are some lovely effects, but the attempt to show that the magic of movies comes out of anonymous, egalitarian teamwork makes your tongue feel coated. With Greta Scacchi, Desiree Becker, Omero Antonutti, and Margarita Lozano. Based on an idea by Lloyd Fonvielle, the screenplay is by the Tavianis and Tonino Guerra. The music is by Nicola Piovani; the cinematography is by Giuseppe Lanci. Early L.A. was recreated in Italy and the Grand Canyon sequence was shot in Spain. (The Tavianis don't speak English.)—P.K. (Cinema Village; March 4.)

Hardcore (1979)—George C. Scott is the Calvinist father from Grand Rapids who searches for his runaway teen-age daughter in the porno-prostitution world of California. The father feels no temptation, so there's no contest; he's above sex, and he hates porno the way John Wayne hated rustlers and Commies. The writer-director, Paul Schrader, sets up the picture as a demonstration of the superiority of fundamentalist moral values over pornographic laxness—as if there were nothing in between. It's a detached, opaque, affectionless movie; since it doesn't regard the young prostitutes as human, there's no horror in their dehumanization—only frigid sensationalism. With Peter Boyle and Season Hubley.—P.K. (Cinema Village; March 5-6.)

Henry V—Adapted and directed by its young star, Kenneth Branagh, this fast-paced version isn't exultant, like the one made forty-five years earlier by Laurence Olivier. Branagh emphasizes the price paid for war: the bloodshed. And, in keeping with his generation's supposed disillusion with war, he minimizes the play's glorification of the English fighting man. His conception of how to film the play is to look closely at the conniving, the misgivings, the ego wars. (This epic noir doesn't indicate why the French lost at Agincourt.) Branagh is not an overnight great moviemaker; his attempts at spectacular effects strain his inventiveness. But as an actor he has something of James Cagney's confident Irishness; he's intensely likable, with a beautiful, expressive voice and a straightforwardness that drives the whole film ahead. He and the other performers are so up that you feel their pride in working on true dramatic poetry. It's a company of stars: Paul Scofield as the melancholy French king whose face foretells the doom of his army, Christopher Ravenscroft as the herald Mountjoy, Derek Jacobi as the Chorus, Judi Dench as Mistress Quickly, Robbie Coltrane as Falstaff, Brian Blessed as Exeter, Richard Briers as Bardolph, Richard Easton as the Constable of France, Alec McCowen as Ely.—P.K. (11/27/89) (Quad Cinema, and Festival.)

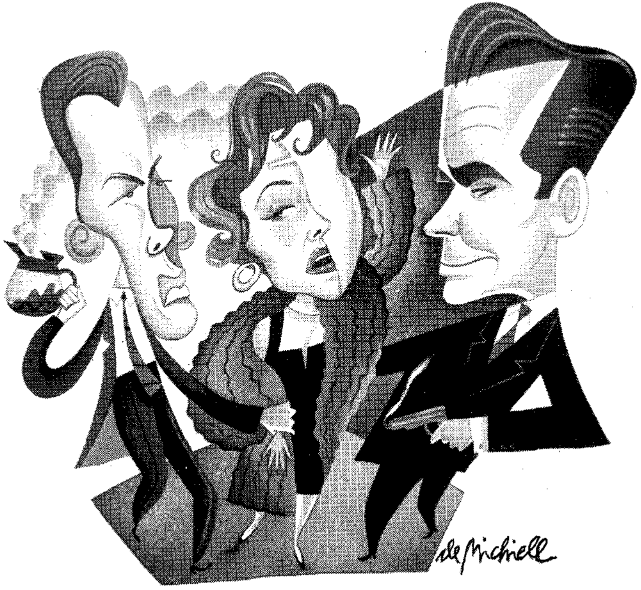
The Idiot (1951)—Kurosawa made this version of the Dostoyevski novel right after "Rashomon," using the same two men—Masayuki Mori (the husband in "Rashomon") as Prince Myshkin, and Toshiro Mifune (the bandit in "Rashomon") as Rogozhin. It's a long, uneven, fascinating film, with such curiosities as a Nastasya Filipovna (Setsuko Hara) modelled on Maria Casarès in Cocteau's "Orpheus." In Japanese.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; March 7.)

Internal Affairs—Bad fun. This sophisticated variant of other L.A. cops-and-coke-and-art-world thrillers has a creepy, rhythmic quality that sucks you in and keeps you amused. The subtext is ingeniously nasty: it's a dirty, sexy twist on the Iago-Othello relationship. This Iago is a prosperous veteran cop, played by Richard Gere, who's being investigated by two officers from the Police Department's internal-affairs division: a righteous, ramrod-straight Latino (Andy Garcia) with a beautiful blond wife, and his sane, honest partner (Laurie Metcalf). Gere torments the stiff-backed Othello (Garcia), boasting of his adulterous conquest of the blond wife, and manipulates him into a jealous rage. Gere slithers through the picture very dexterously, but Garcia gives a one-note, glaring-eyed performance: except for his key, violent explosions (which are terrific), he's so rigid he's barely human. As Garcia's partner, a lesbian who doesn't try to ingratiate herself with anybody, Metcalf gives a strong, contained performance. Directed by Mike Figgis, whose previous feature was the 1988 "Stormy Monday." The smart script is by Henry Bean.—P.K. (2/5/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

The Little Mermaid—Disney-style kitsch. It's technologically sophisticated, but with just about all the simpering old Disney values in place. They're just slightly updated: the Little Mermaid—a teen-age tootsie in a flirty seashell bra—is like Sleeping Beauty plus tomboy spunk. The film does have a cheerful calypso number ("Under the Sea," by Howard Ashman and Alan Menken), and the color is bright—at least, until the mermaid goes on land, when everything seems to dull out. Pat Carroll provides the voice of Ursula, the Sea Witch; Samuel E. Wright provides the voice of Sebastian.—P.K. (12/11/89) (Embassy.)

Music Box—When the cast and the script are right for Costa-Gavras—as they are here—he can give a courtroom melodrama the pull and excitement of a thriller. Jessica Lange is the Chicago lawyer defending her retired steelworker father (Armin Mueller-Stahl) against deportation to Hungary, where the Communist government is waiting to try him for war crimes. The emotional core of the movie is that during the trial, as the Second World War victims give their accounts, the daughter begins to lose faith in her father's innocence. There are no flashbacks; there's no shock apparatus. We simply take in what they're saying, and we watch her take it in. Lange verges on the astounding. Costa-Gavras provides a low-key, controlled atmosphere, and she fills it with passion. The final plot developments feel fake, but this is a remarkably lucid piece of storytelling. The script is by Joe Eszterhas.—P.K. (1/8/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, 59th Street East Cinema, Waverly, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

My Left Foot—The greatness of Daniel Day-Lewis's performance as the Dubliner Christy Brown, a victim of cerebral palsy who became a painter and a writer, is that he pulls you inside Christy's frustration and rage (and his bottomless thirst). There's nothing soft or maudlin about this movie's view of Christy: he's anguished and locked in, yet excitingly insolent. The movie may tear you apart, but it's the story of a triumphantly tough guy who lived it up, and Day-Lewis's interpretation has some of the sexual seductiveness that was so startling in Olivier's Richard III. This is the first film of the Irish playwright-director Jim Sheridan, who wrote the superb screenplay with another Irish playwright, Shane Connaughton. With Brenda Fricker, Ray McAnally, Fiona Shaw, Ruth McCabe, and Hugh O'Conor playing Christy as a child.—P.K. (10/2/89) (Gramercy, and Lincoln Plaza.)



Lee Marvin, Gloria Grahame, and Glenn Ford in "The Big Heat"

Roger & Me—Michael Moore's widely praised muckraking documentary is about his pursuit of Roger Smith, the chairman of General Motors, who, according to the film, is directly responsible for closing eleven plants and bringing about the destruction of Flint, Michigan—GM's birthplace and Moore's home town. The film purports to show what was happening in Flint from February, 1987, to August, 1989, but what happens is that Moore, a big shambling joker who's the director, producer, writer, and star, deadpans his way through interviews with an assortment of unlikely people, who are used as stooges. He chases gags and improvises his own version of history: in his account of the plant closings, the worker layoffs, and the construction of tourist attractions, he compresses the events of many years and fiddles with the time sequence. He comes on in a give-'em-hell style, but he breaks faith with the audience. And he does something that is humanly very offensive: "Roger & Me" uses its leftism as a superior attitude. Members of the audience can laugh at ordinary working people and still feel that they're taking a politically correct position.—P.K. (1/8/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Sutton, and 57th St. Playhouse.)

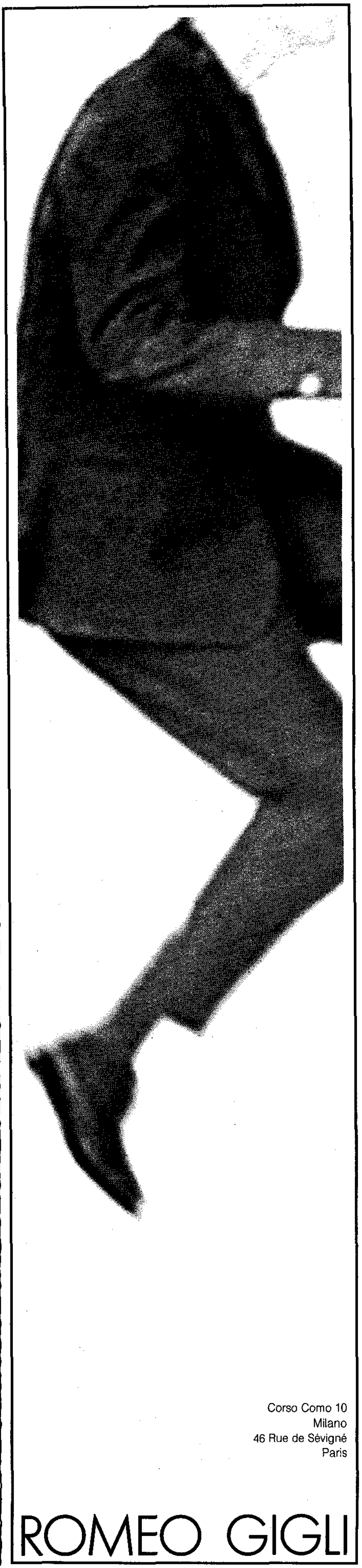
Shirley Valentine—Willy Russell, who wrote the play (and the movie) "Educating Rita," gives us another Englishwoman learning a thing or two about life. This time, it's a housewife in her forties whose kids are grown and gone and whose husband is so unresponsible that she spends a lot of time talking to the kitchen wall. A friend persuades her to come along on a two-week holiday in Greece, and Shirley, away from her dull husband and her constricted life, starts to enjoy herself for the first time since her adolescence. But she's not just having a fling or reliving her giddy youth—the writer wants us to understand that she's experiencing deeper, maturer pleasures. Russell's script is an adaptation of his play, which was a monologue. Though this isn't a one-woman show anymore, it's still a showcase for perky, round-faced Pauline Collins. She's very likable, and her performance is mercifully restrained. Lewis Gilbert's direction is long on maturity and short on pleasure: the picture moves at a careful, measured, guided-tour pace. By the end, poor Shirley seems more than ever like a lost soul: an Edna O'Brien character who woke up and found herself on "The Love Boat." Also with Tom Conti.—T.R. (9/4/89) (Worldwide Cinemas.)

Steel Magnolias—Chalk scraping across a blackboard for two hours.—P.K. (Gemini, and Chelsea Cinemas.)

Time Bandits (1981)—Written by two members of the Monty Python group, Michael Palin and the American expatriate Terry Gilliam, who also directed, this surreal adventure fantasy has been conceived as a movie for children and adults. It's about a little English boy who is hurtled from one era to another by a pack of six dwarfs who have stolen The Supreme Being's map of the holes in the space-time continuum, and it's as picaresque as you can get, with Ian Holm as Napoleon, John Cleese as Robin Hood, Sean Connery as Agamemnon, Ralph Richardson as The Supreme Being, who's too busy to get his three-piece suit pressed, and David Warner, who's a great-looking Evil Genius—he wears talons and a Nixon nose out of a David Levine drawing. All this seems to do something for the eight-to-twelve-year-old boys in the audience—the ones known to be very high on D. & D. (Dungeons and Dragons)—that it may not do for adults, who will probably see and hear a lot of jokes without feeling much impulse to laugh. The whimsical rhythms of the vaudeville-skit humor often seem to be the result of mistiming; the interludes with Palin and Shelley Duvall as wonky sweethearts are especially musty— the two of them seem more amused than the audience. It's far from a bad movie, but it doesn't quite click together, either. The director doesn't shape the material satisfyingly; this may be one of those rare pictures that suffers from a surfeit of good ideas. Songs by George Harrison.—P.K. (Cinema Village; starting March 7.)

Tropic of Cancer (1970)—A trivial but entertaining sex comedy derived from the Henry Miller novel about expatriates in Paris. This series of vignettes and fantasies, with bits of Miller's language rolling out, may be closer to Russ Meyer's "The Immoral Mr. Teas" than to its source, but at least it isn't fusty. It makes you laugh. With Rip Torn, and Ellen Burstyn, James Callahan, David Bauer, and Ginette Leclerc. There's a glimpse of Henry Miller standing in front of a church. Directed by Joseph Strick; written by Strick and Betty Botley. (The story is updated.)—P.K. (Cinema Village; March 2-3.)

The War of the Roses—Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner play Oliver and Barbara Rose, a yuppie couple whose banally "perfect" marriage isn't strong enough to survive their individual mid-life crises. When they decide to divorce, things get real ugly: the Roses' hatred and pettiness keep escalating, to the point of absurdity and far beyond. These successful, eighties-style people are revealed as greedy, self-centered, infantile: they'd rather die than have to sacrifice either their egos or their possessions. (This social observation may not come as a surprise to everybody.) "The War of the Roses," written by Michael Leeson (from a novel by Warren Adler), is one of Hollywood's periodic attempts at black comedy, and, like most of its predecessors, it's not quite black enough and not quite funny enough. The director, Danny DeVito, who also acts in the film, seems a bit too pleased with his own outrageousness. The picture has a peculiar, not very satisfying tone: smugly savage.—T.R. (Coronet, and Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Criterion Center; through March 1.)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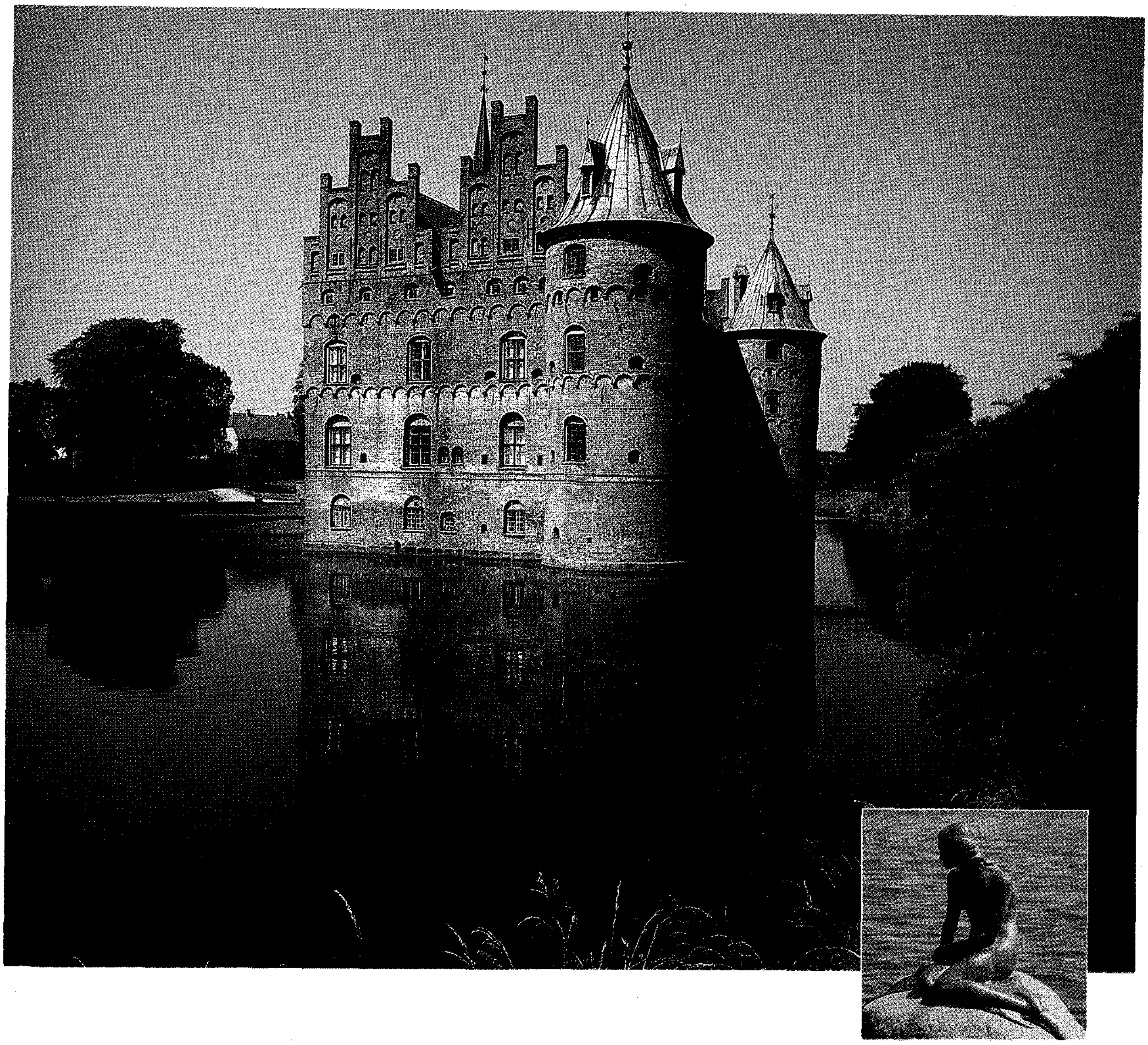

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Notes and Comment

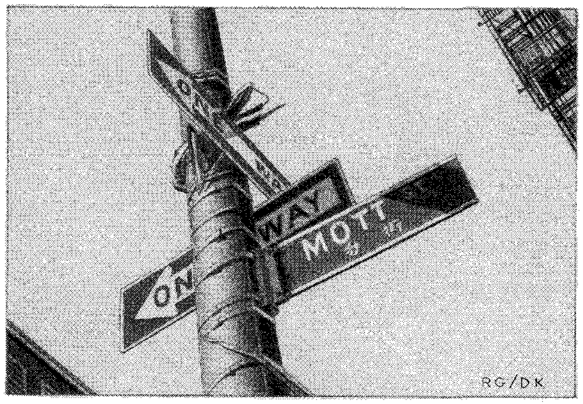
THE unification of Germany, if it happens, will be the dénouement of this long chapter of Cold War history in which the structures of confrontation have dissolved. It will also introduce a new chapter, because the disappearance of the East-West split into a whole Germany will mean the emergence of a nation that is certain to be a central feature of the geopolitical structures of the future. Right now, however, when the unification has not yet happened and notions of how the world will rearrange itself are still speculations, there is a quiet, between-chapters moment, in which deeper themes of history—centered, as it happens, in Germany—are present to us in a way that they weren't before.

The two most traumatic political experiences of our time have been the Holocaust and the nuclear terror. They did not overtake us simultaneously, but they overlapped in the sense that in the postwar period we have had to absorb the meaning of both. And yet these two evils are so different that it is almost impossible to keep them in mind at the same time. The Holocaust consists of documented facts. The nuclear terror is a blank. The Holocaust arose from the darkest side of human nature, and efforts to come to terms with it have had to do with allocating responsibility. The nuclear terror arose from the inventions of men of good will, and engendered helplessness: the fear has been not of villains but of events escalating out of control; it is a predicament of innocents. The only way we could live with the Holocaust has been to acknowledge it fully, and the only way we could live with the nuclear terror has been to deny it, but in one way or another we have all lived with both.

With the prospective unification of Germany, our relationship to both traumas has shifted. All this past year, as the confrontation between East and West melted away, the nuclear warheads aimed across the East-West divide have become increasingly directionless. But no event could demonstrate this lack of direction more dramatically than the removal of the line that divides the two Germanys—the line across which short-range nuclear weapons, capable only of reaching the opposite Germany, have been aimed. Nuclear weapons have long been said to be unusable, yet governments have continued to manufacture and deploy them. The unusableness of the weapons in the two Germanys is of a new and more convincing kind, and it vividly represents the altered nature of the terror that has been a constant backdrop to life since the end of the war. However, the change in Germany has had an opposite effect on the fears surrounding the Holocaust. Germany was split, in part, to punish it for the Holocaust and to prevent such a tragedy from happening again. In an ironic twist of history, the nuclear face-off became the enforcer of that split. In effect, one terror yielded to the other. Now, as the second terror recedes, the spectre of the first rises again, in the form of a large and dominant Germany. It is not the same Germany as the one we fought fifty years ago, of course, but the associations are inescapable, and endorsing unification requires a conscious act of trust.

This trust is apparently forthcoming from most of the nations of the world, and it seems to be well founded. It also has profound implications. It marks the decriminalization of Germany, and thus detaches the Holocaust from Germany in a way that causes that tragedy to belong, more than ever, to everyone. With respect to the Holocaust, "learning from history" means learning that human beings, and not just Germans, are capable of such evil—that potential evil is a given of human nature, from which no nation is immune. The nuclear terror, too, has become detached from its original context. It is no longer embedded in the East-West struggle, because that struggle is so quickly fading. The true nature of the terror—its uselessness and our helplessness—is now undisguised by national or ideological mystiques.

This is a pivotal moment in the history of the West: we can look both to the past and to the future, with our vision undistorted by present involvement in either. The gift of the moment is a humbling knowledge both of the darkness of evil and of the darkness of innocence.



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Royalty

THERE'S probably no single thing you own that the Mighty Shirt Kings couldn't paint on a shirt or a jacket or a pair of jeans and make it look *fly*. Have you got a Mercedes? An Alfa Romeo? Got it all kitted up with a spoiler and special yellow fog lights and maybe gold rims on the wheels? Shirt Kings can do that. Deacon James got his car done. Check out his picture in the Shirt Kings' portfolio. Your car doesn't even have to be that special. One guy got a Mustang done. It's right there, front of the book. A d.j. brought in a picture of his turntable. Looks good. Another guy brought in a picture of his dog—wanted it on a shirt, dressed up like a heavyweight boxer going into a night club. Said put a gold rope chain around his neck and put some Gucci clothes on him. That dog looks *good*.

"The Shirt Kings are a world wide representation of what the well-dressed, well-informed hip-hopper is wearing today." That's from a handout. So's this: "With the demand for Shirt Kings wear from Japan to San Francisco and around the country, nothing says New York or touches Hip Hop heat like Shirt Kings!"

The Shirt Kings are four guys: Mighty Nike (whose name rhymes with "bike"), King Kasheme, Jef Star, and Beefkake Dave. Mighty Nike and King Kasheme were the starters. They went to high school together in Manhattan—High School of Art and Design. Out of there in 1981. They used to draw together. After graduation, they got a job working in construction on Perry Street. Kasheme got laid off and called up Nike and said, "Why don't we start airbrushing shirts down at the Colosseum?" That would be the Jamaica Colosseum, a mall in Queens. Nike said, "Sure. When I get laid off, I'll get up with you."

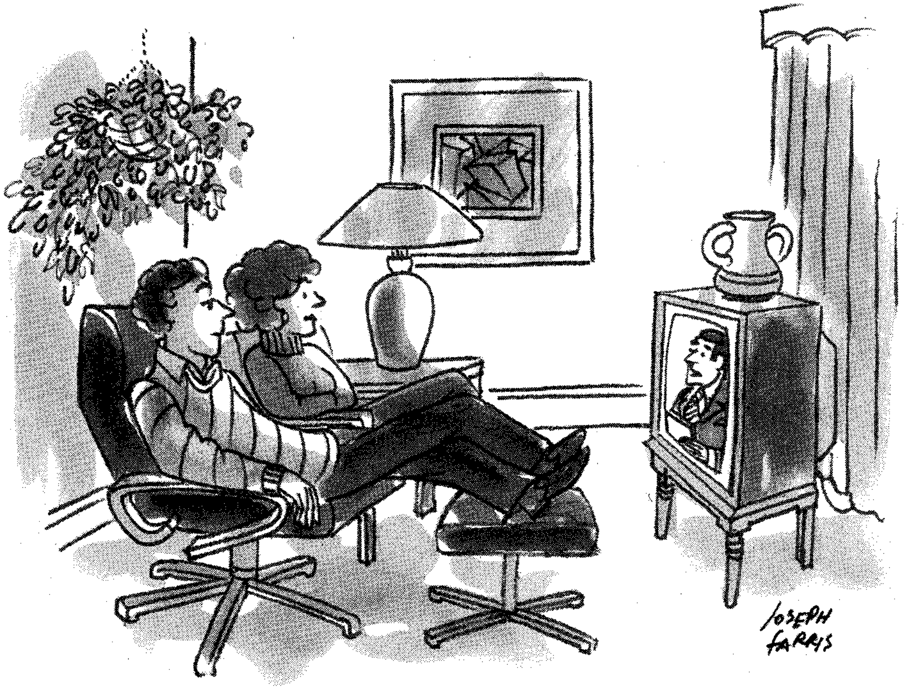
For about a week, they were just K & N Shirts. Then Kasheme came up with the Shirt Kings. Nike said, "We're more than that. We're the *Mighty* Shirt Kings." Then they added Beefkake Dave and Jef Star. Jef was doing shirts in the Colosseum, too, and Nike figured he might as well be with them as against them. Beefkake is the acrylic stylist. Quiet guy, but intense. Works with a brush. The others use airbrushes, so there's that steam hiss when they draw, like a radiator's.

Nike likes to draw Mighty Mouse. He has a Mighty Mouse tattoo on his upper right arm, with "Mighty Nike" written under it. Around his neck he wears a gold chain with a crystal on it and an Italian horn he got from his girlfriend. On one hand he has a ring with a "C," for his real name, which is secret but is probably something like Clarence or Chauncey, because he won't tell what it is, and turns bashful when you ask. Nike also likes to draw portraits, babies or adults. Beefkake likes to do Mighty Mouse and Roger Rabbit. Jef Star likes to do cars, and King Kasheme likes to do nude art.

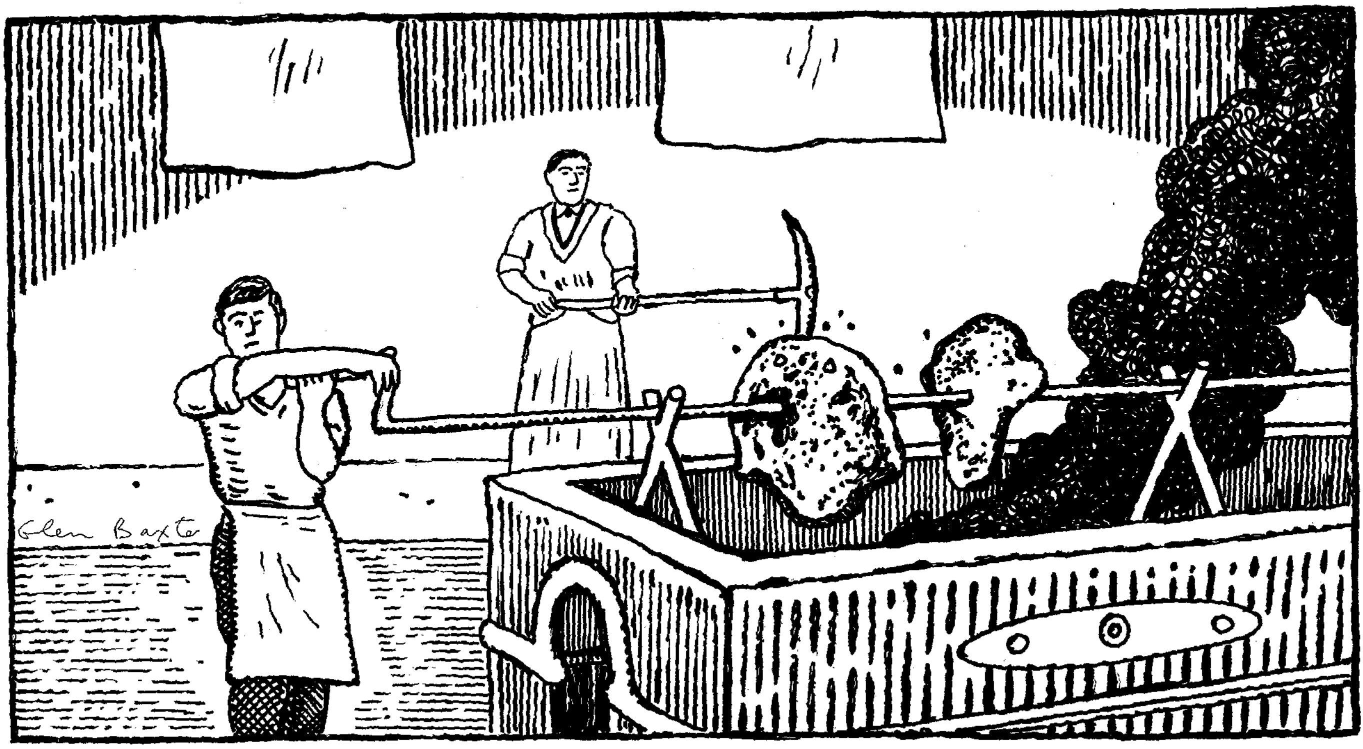
What the Shirt Kings are trying to do at the moment is enterprise the business. King Kasheme's down in Virginia right now, walking around with a handout that says, "Hey Virginia! Guess who's coming to town?. . . You guessed it. 'The Mighty Shirt Kings' themselves. Now you too can get the flyest shirts; pants; jackets; canvases & Jeep tire covers done up like the 'Rappers' themselves."

The Colosseum is at 89-02 165th Street. It's the kind of place where some of the security guards walk around with two-by-fours. The Colosseum is two floors filled with booths and shops. If you're low on frankincense, or you've got to have a new lodestone, or a bottle of floor wash to take a hex off your house, they have a place that sells that. Eddie's Original Gold Caps—"We Use Only 22kt Dental Gold"—that's there. Eddie's is the place with the sign showing the pair of red lips pulled back in a smile and "GOLD CAPS" spelled out on the teeth. The Shirt Kings call their store the Jungle. It's downstairs, in the back. When you reach the yellow Formica-topped tables at the Food Court, turn right: there's the Jungle. Walk inside. Sounds like a night club. Five video games to your left: "Off Road," "Mechanized Attack," "Out Run," "Superstars," and "Bad Dudes." Three television screens up by the ceiling playing music videos. Dark-blue walls. Behind the counter hang the pants, sweatshirts, and T-shirts ready to be picked up—not all of them by ordinary citizens. L.L. Cool J shops here. Those are his jeans beside the counter, waiting for him to sit in the wicker throne by the wall and hold them up and have his picture taken and put into the book—another happy customer, another happy *famous* customer. Other famous customers: Spinderella, Bizmarkie, Big Daddy Kane, Salt and Pepa, De La Soul, Guy, Monie Love. And Malcolm-Jamal Warner, from "The Cosby Show": they've done a wagonload of stuff for him—jackets, shirts, pants, director's chair for his music-video production company.

Ask Nike if you can look at the book. While he's getting it, notice the small



"President Gorbachev had his hands full again today."



A GLANCE INTO THE KITCHEN CONFIRMED MY DEEPEST SUSPICIONS. THEY WERE COOKING THE OMELETTES "FLEMISH STYLE."

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sign behind the counter: "No Refunds, No Matter Who You Get In. Believe Dat." Ask to see Gizmo and Stripe, the ferrets in the aquarium behind the counter. They're the Shirt King mascots. When Nike wakes them up and brings them out, they scamper up and down the carpeting on the counter; people stop what they're doing and come over and say, "That a *mink*, man!" Go ahead and ask questions, but don't shout; shouting only makes Nike wince and ask you to talk quietly. He will show you the portrait of the couple who asked the Shirt Kings to write on it "Forever, For Always, For Love." He'll show you a picture of the shirts they did for the cheerleading squad at Hillcrest High School. Once you get comfortable, make a choice. Maybe have your portrait painted on a jacket, you holding a champagne bottle, and a glass overflowing in your hand, and have the Shirt Kings write beneath it, "Dom P. Nothing but the Best for Me." Maybe ask for some rhinestones on it—they're just getting into those. Or pose for your portrait wearing your Pittsburgh Steelers hat and jacket. Have them write your name below your face, then tell Kasheme, "Put a *lion* over my shoulder." He did it for Marlon; he'll do it for you.

Home Shopping

As you may know, the United States has a trade imbalance with Japan, which worries everyone. The Japanese are trying to help out by buying American liberally. They are even willing to invest in used goods. The exchange goes something like this: you buy a brand-new Sony Walkman, they buy the Algonquin Hotel; you buy the latest-model Honda sedan, they buy a chunk of Rockefeller Center. At the moment, young urban Japanese professionals are so intent on disposing of their incomes that Fujisankei, Japan's largest communications conglomerate, broadcasts on Japanese television a show, called "World Shopping Theatre," that takes its viewers around the world and suggests ways for them to spend their cash. A Japanese viewer sees one of the show's hosts describing, say, a three-million-dollar château in France; the viewer likes the place, dials a phone number, and buys it—no fuss, no muss, no middlepersons. During the three years that the show has been on the air, it has offered viewers a New York taxicab; the chairs that Carnegie Hall patrons sat in before the hall's last renovation; and some of the jewels that Elizabeth Taylor wore to promote her perfume, Passion. Lately, "World Shopping Theatre" has been getting into beers and fine wines, and last month it prepared a segment featuring a dinner for two at "21," accompanied by a 1979 Château Haut Brion, a 1978 Château Petrus, a 1979 Château Lafite Rothschild, a 1982 Château Latour, a 1986 Batard Montrachet, and a 1962 Château Margaux. With tax and tips, and a little extra to cover the trip from Japan and a local hotel for a night or two, the cost of these wines to a "World Shopping Theatre" viewer could run well into four figures. (*You* buy a Nintendo game.)

We were curious to see how a segment like that is put together, so we dropped by "21" on the evening the one featuring it was to be filmed—an evening when, as it happened, we were suffering from a dizzying head cold. We got there about nine, and Matthew Siegel, the restaurant's chief sommelier, took us on a tour of the wine cellar, showing us 24k.-gold flecks drifting through bottles of

Goldwasser, a shelf whose five double magnums of red Bordeaux alone are worth sixteen thousand dollars, and bins of rare wines privately laid in by people so famous we don't even need to mention them. Mr. Siegel is an amiable, soft-spoken gentleman with, as far as we could tell, an encyclopedic knowledge of wine. He informed us that Japan produces some of the world's great sommeliers.

At eleven, we were alerted that the crew and cast had arrived. We hastened upstairs and out onto Fifty-second Street in time to watch a very long white limo pull up to the club. A tall, handsome, raw-boned American man in a tux got out and gave his arm to his companion, a beautiful young Japanese woman in a white fur coat, an emerald scarf, and four-inch heels. She looked very happy to be at the entrance to the "21" Club, spoke with great animation to the camera, and then ran and opened the front door herself. That meant that the crew had to film another take, because "21" patrons normally wait for a uniformed doorman to open the portals. While the shot was being set up again, we learned from Katherine Ray, a Fujisankei representative, that Yasuhiro Kitao, the director, and Naoko Yamazaki, the actress, had travelled from Paris and Japan, respectively, to arrive in New York that day, that they would work through the night to finish the "21" filming, and that they would hop on a plane right afterward to film a deep-sea-fishing sequence in Florida. We also learned that the limousine contained a hot tub.

After several more takes, everyone moved into "21" for the interior photography. There we asked Miss Yamazaki's escort, a New York actor named Tim Devlin, who said he had never been in "21" before, what look he was trying for in his part. "I'm supposed to be as American as I can," he said. "Tomorrow, I'm doing the 'Geraldo' show with Cheryl Tiegs. Call time is 8 A.M. But if I get to eat some of the '21' food it will all be worthwhile."

Mr. Devlin did get to eat some, about three and a half hours later. Before that, he got to accompany Miss Yamazaki through many takes in various parts of "21." He got to hear several crew members try to come up with alternative ways of saying that "21" was the best restaurant in New York. ("It offers a special dining experience," "a unique dining experience," "a very special dining experience.") Mr. Devlin got to hear Lisa Knothe, a hair and makeup artist, warn Miss Yamazaki, "Keep your eyes bright—don't fall asleep." He got to watch the cameraman film the "21" carpet, with its logo of an ironwork gate and the numerals "21." He got to walk under Chris Evert's tennis racquet and Jack Nicklaus's golf club, hanging in the bar, and to see the table in the main dining room—it's one of the "power tables"—where a scene from "Wall Street" was filmed. At about 2:30 A.M., he got to see Mr. Kitao look at his watch, slap a palm to his forehead, and mutter, in English, "Oh, it's already today." He got to hear Mr. Kitao tell Miss Yamazaki that her "surprised" expression was looking unnatural. He got to watch Mr. Siegel present a bottle of Château Margaux '62 to Miss Yamazaki, who was born that year; to clink glasses several times with her; to taste the wine; and to pronounce it remarkable. He also offered us a small sip.

At about three-thirty, Mr. Devlin stood on the empty sidewalk outside "21" to keep us company while we waited for a cab. The filming was still going on. We learned that 1962 was also the year Mr. Devlin was born, and that, in fact, today was his birthday. He made his début on earth exactly twenty-eight years before the moment when Mr. Kitao slapped his head in exhaustion.

"Did you enjoy the wine?" he asked us.

We explained about our cold, and said that one thing was certain: Château Margaux '62 didn't taste like Robitussin.

Monet in the 90's
Monet in the 90's

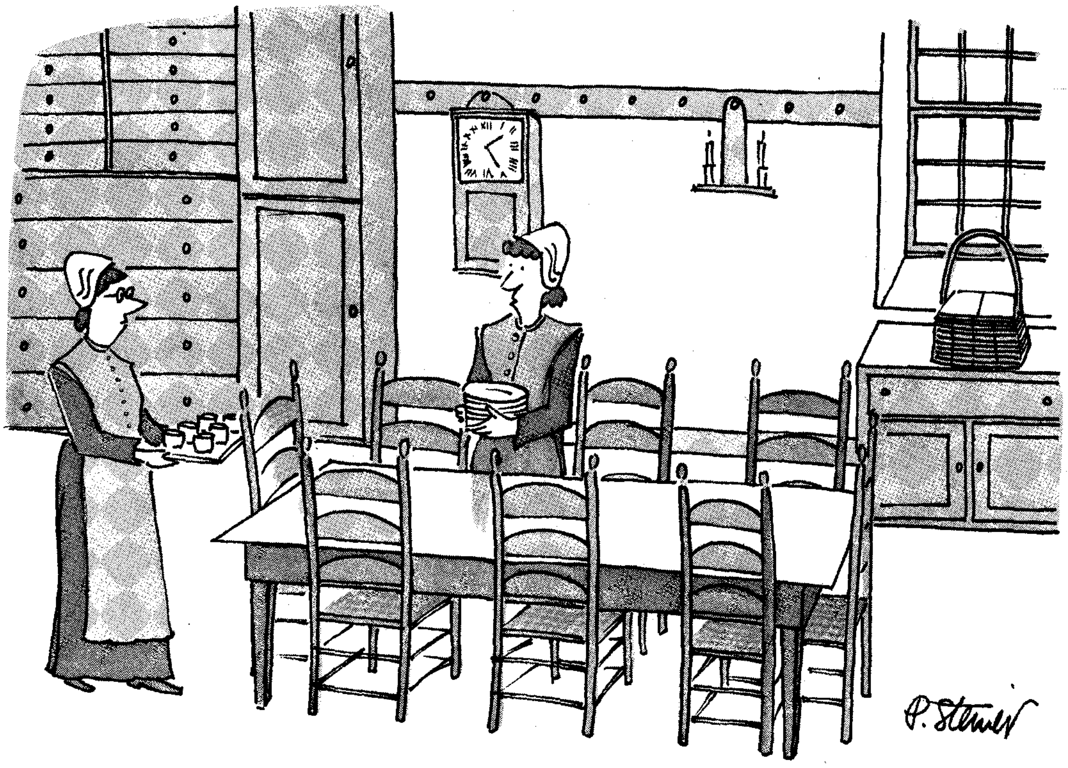
Man-Made

YOU start with the honey-and-almond shampoo. Get a nice lather going, especially around the bracelets and the rosettes and anyplace the underhairs grow. What you're after is that extra bit of pouf. Then you cream rinse. Towel off. Blow-dry in half-inch sections—that's a two-to-three-hour job. There are tricks and gimmicks in the business, but one thing you'll learn is there are no shortcuts, because what you are creating is a work of art.

We are at the 114th annual Westminster Kennel Club dog show, in Madison Square Garden, with Dee A. Shepherd, a thickset man of thirty-six who has a well-barbered brown beard and brown hair, which he wears brushed back from his face, and several heavy gold chains and two chunky gold-and-diamond rings. Mr. Shepherd is a professional groomer/handler, a line he has followed since he was sixteen. He is, if not the foremost groomer/handler, then one of the ten per cent of all groomer/handlers who win at ninety per cent of all dog shows. His specialty is what is known as coated breeds: Maltese, Pekinese, Lhasa Apsos, Pomeranians, Shih Tzus, Yorkshire terriers, and poodles, standard, miniature, and toy.

On average, Mr. Shepherd and his partner, Wendell Sammet, handle thirty dogs at a time. They have a staff of five. For years, Mr. Shepherd and

Mr. Sammet have been the exclusive groomer/handlers for the champion white standard poodles of Alekai Kennels, which was founded by Mrs. Henry J. Kaiser, the industrialist's wife. "Poodles have a lot of bad P.R.," Mr. Shepherd told us. "They're known as nervous, yippy dogs. The fact of the matter is they're the smartest dogs around. They're too smart to use for Seeing Eye dogs, because if you show a poodle a corner with points A, B, and C and train him to follow the letters, he'll do it three times and then he'll realize that the shortest distance is from A to C. Which isn't great for the person at the end of the leash."



"If the truth be told, I prefer Biedermeier."

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Dee A. Shepherd grew up in Kansas City, Missouri. He had early plans to get into veterinary medicine, but the plans fell apart when he realized that he couldn't deal on a daily basis with matters of life and death. So he got into grooming instead. That may have been because his mother was the proprietor of a beauty salon, or it may have been because he was just naturally talented with hair. "Grooming coated dogs is high-intensity work, because of the coats themselves and the value of the dogs," Mr. Shepherd said. "We have dogs that are worth twenty-five thousand dollars. And, let's face it, this is not a warehouse of boxes. It's live animals, and they bring with them responsibilities, and needs. If a Maltese gets stained or a poodle chews the hair off its ear, I'm the one an owner's going to blame."

The grooming area of the Garden consists of five narrow aisles jammed with shipping crates, tables, tabourets, blow-dryers the size of Shop-Vacs, extension cords, and towel racks—all bathed in a fog of Aqua Net and cigarette smoke. Dogs languish in crates or drape themselves on boxes or docilely await the groomers' ministrations on stands resembling hangmen's scaffolds, each dog secured by what appears to be a noose. There are a hundred poodles at the Garden this year, and many, many of them are here right now, in various stages of canine dishabille. Several have their topknots tightly rubber-banded. One has its ears mummified in electric-blue Vetrap. Another lolls on its back with furry paws akimbo. Besides the hum the dryers make and the incessant chatter of scissors, there is another, more sinister sound: a hornet buzz issuing from electric clippers.

The three permissible clips for show poodles are the Continental, the English Saddle, and the Puppy. The most popular is the Continental—the topiary cut that turned up so often in nineteen-fifties shower-curtain depictions of poodles. It calls for a mown swath that leaves the dog naked from the waist down, sculptured billows over the chest and shoulders, on the ankles, and at the hips; and a fat ball of fur at the tip of the tail. As haircuts go, the Continental may outdo even the outlandish efforts of Astor Place Hairstylists, but it nevertheless has a practical purpose. "These dogs are retrievers," Mr. Shepherd said. "They're supposed to swim, and the fur is left at the joints to keep them warm." He went on to say, "Poodles are all man-made. We start days in advance, and on show day we spend at least six hours per dog. Scissor work is the true test of a groomer. A lot of people are afraid to pick up the scissors—they're afraid of making that cut. What you're doing is creating a silhouette. Is the dog too tall? You bring him lower to the ground with a fuller clip. Too long in the back? You extend the chest clip and shorten him up."

Once the initial clipping is finished, Mr. Shepherd lets the dog shake out and then scissors the coat all over again. Only then does he begin to comb, powder, shape, and spray. "Americans are known throughout the world for fabulous grooming, presentation, and showmanship," Mr. Shepherd says. "I've given clinics in England and Japan and Chile. The officials here have tried to eliminate hair spray, but there's just no way that will ever happen. The rule books forbid all foreign substances, but everybody uses them. Bleach, talcum, chalk, cornstarch—coat enhancers are the tricks of the trade. I'm a great believer in improving dogs through breeding, but when all is said and done you've got to realize that a dog show is a beauty contest. And Americans have beauty contests down."

LONESOME SHORTY

THE summer before last, I was headed to Denver on my horse Old Dan, driving two hundred head of the ripest-smelling longhorns you ever rode downwind of, when suddenly here comes a balled-up newspaper stuck inside some tumbleweed. As I had been without news for weeks, I leaned down and snatched it up and read it trotting west, though the front page was missing and all there was was columnists and the life-style section, so I read, bouncing along in a cloud of manure, an article called "43 Fabulous Salads to Freshen Up Your Summertime Table," by Prudence Hart, which made me wonder if my extreme lonesomeness might not be the result of diet. Go ahead, say I'm loco, but a cowboy doesn't get much fibre and he eats way too much beef. You herd cattle all day, you come to despise them, and pretty soon, by gorry, you have gone and shot one, and then you must eat it. Meanwhile, all those cattle tromping around on the greens take away your taste for salads, just the way arriving at a creek after cattle have walked in it and drunk from it and spit in it seems to turn a man toward whiskey.

Shorty, you've got to get out of this cowboy life, I thought that night. I was feeling low. The wood was wet, so the campfire smoked, and the beans were cold and the pork half raw, and as I was fetching a folding chair from the saddlebags Old Dan accidentally stepped on me and about broke my foot. Consarn it! I sat down and drew up a list on the back of a picture of my mother.

REASONS TO BE OR NOT TO BE A COWBOY

Freedom to be your own man. *The awful loneliness that ensues from this.*

Most beautiful country on God's green earth to look at. *No home, nowhere to sleep but on the cold ground. You get a bad back, pretty soon you're too bent over to look at scenery.*

Good Old Dan—what else can he do? *You can't live for your horse, especially not one who steps on you.*

Love to be with my pals. *Those cheating, lying gin-soaked idiots? They all moved to town a long time ago.*

The West must be won for the White Man. *I did my part.*

The chance to be a True Cowboy, who stands up for what's Right and Fair. *You oughta settle down and start building up equity. You have got nothing to show for your hard life, nothing.*

So it was an even draw—six of one, half a dozen of the other—but my foot hurt so bad I sold the cattle to a Mormon and headed in to Pleasant Gulch and became deputy to Sheriff Dibble. Bought a condo over the saloon and a full-size bed and walnut dining-room set and blue dotted-swiss curtains. You miss curtains so much on the trail; there's really no place to hang them. And I bought myself a set of china. A cowboy gets sick of the sound of his fork scraping a tin plate, and this was the first *good* china I ever owned: six place settings, with salad bowl, soup bowl, cup and saucer, dinner plate, and dessert plate, in a pattern called Amaryllis, plus two platters, two serving bowls, gravy boat, teapot, and soup tureen.

The truth was, I didn't know five other people in Pleasant Gulch well enough to invite to dinner, but I felt confident I'd be sticking around and would soon make friends, because the town was perfect, its lawns and porches and street lamps so welcoming compared to rocks and buttes, but then one night the young couple next door banged on my door and said, "You're driving us nuts, Mr. Shorty. You gargle so loud, and twirl your rope, and jingle your spurs, and your yodelling is making our lives worthless. No more *yodeladihoo* or *whoopitiyiyo*, O.K.?"

I got so dagnabbed mad I stomped out, saddled Old Dan, and left town without even a coat. What right did they have to say that, anyway? I was burned up. I said, "O.K., you got to be so *unfair*, I'll show you! I'll leave!" But I was already gone. And frankly I've left so many towns by now that I'm used to it and don't even get so mad as in the past. Leaving town is what cowboying is about.

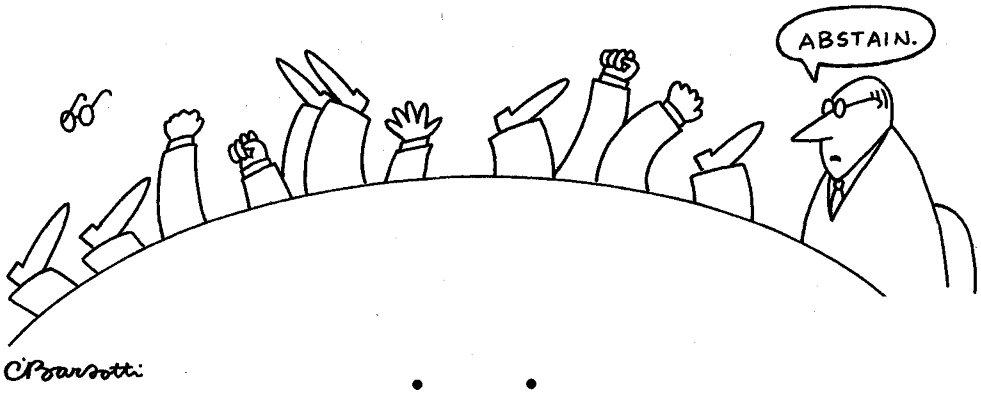
You find a nice place and it's wonderful and then you can't stand it. So you drift off down the trail and get wet and miserable and so lonesome you can't bear it for another minute, so you gallop into the nearest town and are overwhelmed by the Beauty of Society—cheap floozies and old geezers, preachers, lunatics, hoboes, schoolteachers, old scouts with their sunburned faces and their voices raised in song, the jokes and gibes and yarns, the barn dances, the woman who invites you to stay the night. People are great when you haven't seen any for a few months! So you find a job and an apartment, settle down, get comfortable, think, *This time it's for real*—and in a little while are wounded, mad, miserable, and back in the saddle again. This is the basic cowboy pattern.

FROM Pleasant Gulch I rode for twenty-two days along the banks of the Big Crazy, until one day I forgot my boots at a campsite, and had to come in to Pig Valley to purchase a new pair. Rode in on Main Street, rain pouring down in sheets and me soaked to the skin, and a woman yelled from a porch, "Come on in, stranger, and get yourself a plateful of grub!" The Andersons. Kindest people you'd ever want to meet. I sat in their warm kitchen and gabbed for three hours and told them everything about myself, personal stuff, and it was satisfying. I rented a tiny room from them and went to work in their general store and fell in love with their daughter. "You are the son we never had," they said.

Everything was perfect, and then one night Leonora (that was her name) said, with big blue tears in her eyes, "How come you go for long walks alone out across the prairie sometimes, Leonard? Can you imagine how it makes me feel, or do you think I don't *notice*? Do you think that other people don't *talk* about it and wonder why I'm not there *with* you? Don't you see that it makes me look like a *fool*?"

Well, I wasn't going to stick around for thirty years of that, so I saddled up and rode off down the trail toward the Bitterroot, feeling dumb. Couldn't bear to be alone and couldn't bear to be with people, either. Thought it might be due to a lack of fluoride. Or it could be genetic—it's hard to tell. My daddy left home when I was two. If we had fluoride, he took it with him.

Rode thirty-seven days through Arapaho country and finally rode in to Pruitt. A bitterly cold day, windy, snow flurries, and me without pants—a cougar had run off with my only pair as I slept. Didn't mean to settle down, just wanted to sit in the saloon and get the chill off my bones, but a fat lady cried out from a white frame house, "My husband, Bob, is just your same size, Mister!" So in I go and get a pair of his pants. The Nelsons. I took a shower, and the towels were soft and smelled lemony. You miss that softness, that cleanliness, on the trail. Had split-pea soup and talked about this,



that, and the other thing, and the next day I got a job at the stagecoach office, as assistant director of customer service, and fell in love with Lena, and the weeks went along like a song. She was crazy about me and would bound from the bed stark naked and grinning and serenade me in a sweet, flat voice as she dressed and made me a big breakfast. She was a Methodist, so I became a Methodist and taught Sunday school and coached the boys' spelling team, and one day I came home with sixteen place settings of a pattern called Waterlily, and we made plans to wed.

One morning, shaving, I thought, Shorty, this idyllic life is just about to come to a crashing halt. Somebody is about to ruin it. This dawned on me with dead certainty. People would turn on me, and Lena would leave me and knock me down and break my heart. "How can you do it?" I cried, but I knew they sure as shootin' would, and it made me so mad I put down my razor and went straight out the door and up to the bank. Pulled my hat down low, lather all over my face, and six-gun in hand. Burst in and yelled, "Everybody face down on the floor! Nice and easy now, and nobody gets hurt!"

They said, "Why are you doing this, Shorty? You are one of our leading citizens and a Christian and are blessed with the love of a wonderful woman."

I said, "It can't last, so I may as well get something out of it for myself." I left with thirty-four thousand dollars in my saddlebags and rode for forty-three days to a town called Pit City. No family took me in, no woman offered me comfort, and I sought no solace in the church. I paid with cash. Bought a spread of my own called the Rocking Dog and hired two cowhands, Dusty and Lefty.

We got along all right, except that I was jumpy. I couldn't sit still for two minutes. It used to be I could perch on the top rail of the corral, roll a smoke, squint, and not say a word for hours, just spit, but now I paced to and fro and talked a lot, all of it dumb. I'd say, "Tell me, boys, am I a good boss or do you have something on your chest you'd like to get off?" They said everything was hunky-dory. I'd say, "No, it ain't. Something's wrong. Level with me. I've done something to offend you. Tell me what it is." Naw, they said, you're great to us. "You're just being nice. Why won't you say what it is?" I said. Because it's nothing, they replied. "Tell me what's wrong," I said. They said, nothing is.

This went on for weeks, and finally Dusty said, "The schoolmarm is a therapist part time, I hear."

So twice a week for thirty-seven weeks I lay down on Mary Ellen Henry's living-room couch and told her everything about myself. She used cats as a therapeutic medium. (She explained why, but I forget.) A cat lies on your chest and you talk to it, and she listens, e.g.:

Me: Boy I sure feel confused, Puff. I'm so sad and mixed up, I could go get drunk and jump off the roof. But I'd probably miss the ground.

Her: Puff, you tell that nice man to tell you a little more about when his mama left him at the train station and went off with the drygoods salesman.

I gave it my best shot but was no good at therapy, and one morning I said, "I've decided that you've probably done as much for me as you possibly can, Puff, so this will be my last time."

Mary Ellen was stunned, as if I'd slapped her. "How can you do this to me?" she said. "Don't you realize that I'm a part of your life and you've become someone important in mine?"

So off I go again across the sandy flats on Old Dan, heading toward the big mesas, having spent most of the loot from the robbery on therapy, and there I was, lonesome again. Hooked up with an old coot named Gene Smiley, but he never talked. I'd say, "What you think about this goofball President and the millions he dished out to his rich buddies?," knowing Gene was a Republican. Fourteen miles would go clip-clopping by and finally he would say, "Oh, I guess it all depends on how you look at it."

A taciturn sidekick is like buying a ticket to see the sun set. Who needs it? Later, Gene got bit by his horse and was laid up with gelding fever and hallucinated and had fits and talked a blue streak for a month—about economics, mostly—but we had broken up and I wasn't there to enjoy it. I had gone to Big Gap. Lived there two weeks, bought two place settings of china (Royal Doulton), and the same darn thing happened that always does.

They sure named Big Gap right; it's the first thing you think when you get there. I felt so bad after leaving I got sick. I lay down in the dirt and wrapped myself in a blanket and shivered all night and woke up in the morning and found I was about thirty feet from the Oregon Trail, hundreds of wagon trains going by, and now and then a pioneer or a prospector would yell, "Howdy! How are ye down yonder? Ye heading West, too?" and I'd say, "I feel like I'm coming down with something. I don't know, I got a headache and chills and feel weak and listless. You got a thermometer? Is saltpeter supposed to be good for this? Think I should bleed myself?" But my sickly voice could not be heard over the thunder of hooves and the clatter of the wagons. Nobody stopped.

Soon I saddled up and moved on. And now here I am, once more on the move and, seeing a town on the horizon yonder, about to make the old mistake again. I don't know for sure, but that town looks an awful lot like Scabbyville, and if it is, then I wonder if it's true what I heard once about Lena moving to Scabbyville. Somebody said she did, I forget who. Of course, it may not be true, and, then again, that town might not be Scabbyville. I guess there is only one way to find out.

—Garrison Keillor

KAT

ON the thirteenth of November, day of unluck, month of the dead, Kat went into the Toronto General Hospital for an operation. It was for an ovarian cyst, a large one.

Many women had them, the doctor told Kat. Nobody knew why. There wasn't any way of finding out whether the thing was malignant, whether it contained, already, the spores of her death. Not before they went in. He spoke of "going in" the way she'd heard old veterans in TV documentaries speak of assaults on enemy territory. There was the same tensing of the jaw, the same fierce gritting of the teeth, the same grim enjoyment. Except that what he would be going into was her body. Counting down, waiting for the anesthetic, Kat, too, gritted her teeth fiercely. She was terrified, but she was also curious. Curiosity has got her through a lot.

She'd made the doctor promise to save the thing for her, whatever it was, so she could have a look. She was intensely interested in her own body, in anything it might choose to do or produce; although when flaky Dania, who did layout at the magazine, told her this growth was a message to her from her body, and she ought to sleep with an amethyst under the pillow to calm her vibrations, Kat told her to stuff it.

The cyst turned out to be a benign tumor. Kat liked that use of "benign," as if the thing had a soul and wished her well. It was big as a grapefruit, the doctor said. "Big as a coconut," said Kat. Other people had grapefruits. "Coconut" was better. It conveyed the hardness of it, and the hairiness, too.

The hair in it was red—long strands of it wound round and round inside, like a ball of wet wool gone berserk or like the guck you pull out of a clogged bathroom-sink drain. There were little bones in it, too, or fragments of bone—bird bones, the bones of a sparrow crushed by a car. There was a scattering of nails, toe or finger. There were five perfectly formed teeth.

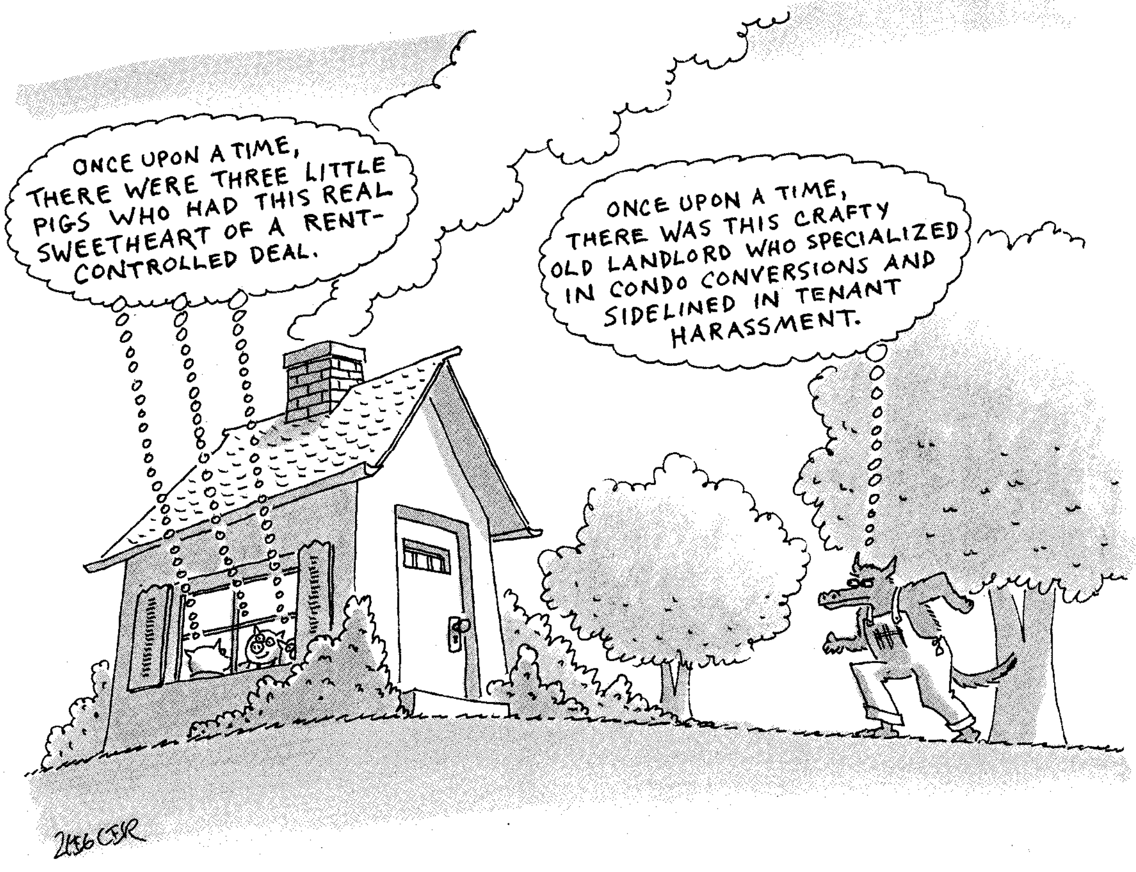
"Is this abnormal?" Kat asked the doctor, who smiled. Now that he had gone in and come out again, unscathed, he was less clenched.

"Abnormal? No," he said carefully, as if breaking the news to a mother about a freakish accident to her newborn. "Let's just say it's fairly common." Kat was a little disappointed. She would have preferred uniqueness.

She asked for a bottle of formaldehyde, and put the cut-open tumor into it. It was hers, it was benign, it did not deserve to be thrown away. She took it back to her apartment and stuck it on the mantelpiece. She named it Hairball. It isn't that different from having a stuffed bear's head or a preserved ex-pet or anything else with fur and teeth looming over your fireplace; or she pretends it isn't. Anyway, it certainly makes an impression.

Ger doesn't like it. Despite his supposed yen for the new and outré, he is a squeamish man. The first time he comes around (sneaks around, creeps around) after the operation, he tells Kat to throw Hairball out. He calls it "disgusting." Kat refuses point-blank, and says she'd rather have Hairball in a bottle on her mantelpiece than the soppy dead flowers he's brought her, which will anyway rot a lot sooner than Hairball will. As a mantelpiece ornament, Hairball is far superior. Ger says Kat has a tendency to push things to extremes, to go over the edge, merely from a juvenile desire to shock, which is hardly a substitute for wit. One of these days, he says, she will go way too far. Too far for him is what he means.

"That's why you hired me, isn't it?" she says. "Because I go way too far." But he's in one of his analyzing moods. He can see these tendencies of hers reflected in her work on the magazine, he says. All that leather and those grotesque and tortured-looking poses are heading down a track he and others are not at all sure they should continue to follow. Does she see what he means, does she take his point? It's a point that's been made before. She shakes her head slightly, says nothing. She knows how that translates: there have been


ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WERE THREE LITTLE PIGS WHO HAD THIS REAL SWEETHEART OF A RENT-CONTROLLED DEAL.
ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS THIS CRAFTY OLD LANDLORD WHO SPECIALIZED IN CONDO CONVERSIONS AND SIDELINED IN TENANT HARASSMENT.

STEP 2:
PAY
PAUL

complaints from the advertisers. *Too bizarre, too kinky.* Tough.

"Want to see my scar?" she says. "Don't make me laugh, though, you'll crack it open." Stuff like that makes him dizzy: anything with a hint of blood, anything gynecological. He almost threw up in the delivery room, when his wife had a baby two years ago. He'd told her that with pride. Kat thinks about sticking a cigarette into the side of her mouth, as in a black-and-white movie of the forties. She thinks about blowing the smoke into his face.

Her insolence used to excite him during their arguments. Then there would be a grab of her upper arms, a smoldering, violent kiss. He kisses her as if he thinks someone else is watching him and judging the image they make together. Kissing the latest thing, hard and shiny, purple-mouthed, crop-headed; kissing a girl, a woman, a girl in a little crotch-hugger skirt and skintight leggings. He likes mirrors.

But he isn't excited now. And she can't decoy him into bed; she isn't ready for that yet, she isn't healed. He has a drink, which he doesn't finish, holds her hand as an afterthought, gives her a couple of avuncular pats on the off-white outsized alpaca shoulder, leaves too quickly.

"Goodbye, Gerald," she says. She pronounces the name with mockery. It's a negation of him, an abolishment of him, like ripping a medal off his chest. It's a warning.

He'd been Gerald when they first met. It was she who transformed him, first to Gerry, then to Ger. (Rhymed with "flair," rhymed with "dare.") She made him get rid of those sucky pursed-mouth ties, told him what shoes to wear, got him to buy a loose-cut Italian suit, redid his hair. A lot of his current tastes—in food, in drink, in recreational drugs, in women's entertainment underwear—were once hers. In his new phase, with his new, hard, stripped-down name ending on the sharpened note of "r," he is her creation.

As she is her own. During her childhood, she was a romanticized Katherine, dressed by her misty-eyed, fussy mother in dresses that looked like ruffled pillowcases. By high school, she'd shed the frills and emerged as a bouncy, round-faced Kathy, with gleaming freshly washed hair and enviable teeth, eager to please and no more interesting than a health-food ad. At university she was Kath, blunt and no-bullshit in her Take-Back-the-Night jeans and checked shirt and her bricklayer-style striped denim peaked hat. When she ran away to England, she sliced herself down to Kat. It was economical, street-feline, and pointed as a nail. It was also unusual. In England you had to do something to get their attention, especially if you weren't English. Safe in this incarnation, she Ramboed through the eighties.

It was the name, she still thinks, that got her the interview, and then the job. The job was with an avant-garde magazine, the kind that was printed on matte stock in black and white, with overexposed closeups of women with hair blowing over their eyes, one nostril prominent: *the razor's edge*, it was called. Haircuts as art, some real art, film reviews, a little stardust, wardrobes of ideas that were clothes and of clothes that were ideas—the metaphysical shoulder pad. She learned her trade well, hands-on. She learned what worked.

She made her way up the ladder, from layout to design, then to the supervision of whole spreads, and then whole issues. It wasn't easy, but it was worth it. She had become a creator; she created total looks. After a while, she could walk down the street in Soho or stand in the lobby at openings and witness her handiwork incarnate, strolling around in outfits she'd put together, spouting her warmed-over pronouncements. It was like being God, only God had never got around to off-the-rack lines.

By that time her face had lost its roundness, though the teeth, of course, remained: there was something to be said for North American dentistry. She'd shaved off most of the hair, worked on the drop-dead stare, perfected a certain turn of the neck that conveyed an aloof inner authority. What you had to make them believe was that you knew something they didn't know yet. What you also had to make them believe was that they, too,

IN MEMORY OF MY FATHER: AUSTRALIA

You arose—I dreamt so last night—and left for
Australia. The voice, with a triple echo,
ebbed and flowed, complaining about climate,
grime, that the deal with the flat is stymied,
pity it's not downtown, though near the ocean,
no elevator but the bathtub's indeed an option,
ankles keep swelling. "Looks like I've lost my slippers"
came through rapt yet clear via satellite.
And at once the receiver burst into howling "*Adelaida! Adelaida!*"—
into rattling and crackling, as if a shutter,
ripped off its hinges, were pounding the wall with inhuman power.

Still, better this than the silky powder
canned by the crematorium, than the voucher—
better these snatches of voice, this patchwork
monologue of a recluse trying to play a genie

for the first time since you formed a cloud above a chimney.

—Joseph Brodsky

(*Translated, from the Russian, by the author.*)

• •

could know this thing, this thing that would give them eminence and power and sexual allure, would attract envy to them—but for a price. The price of the magazine. What they could never get through their heads was that it was done entirely with cameras. Frozen light, frozen time. Given the angle, she could make any woman look ugly. Any man, as well. She could make anyone look beautiful, or at least interesting. It was all photography, it was all iconography. It was all in the choosing eye. This was the thing that could never be bought, no matter how much of your pitiful monthly wage you blew on snakeskin.

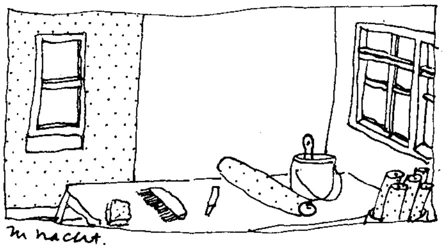
Despite the status, *the razor's edge* was fairly low-paying. Kat herself could not afford many of the things she contextualized so well. The grottiness and expense of London began to get to her; she got tired of gorging on the canapés at literary launches in order to scrimp on groceries, tired of the fuggy smell of cigarettes ground into the red-and-maroon carpeting of pubs, tired of the pipes bursting every time it froze in winter, and of the Clarissas and Melissas and Penelopes at the magazine rabbiting on about how they had been literally, absolutely, totally freezing all night, and how it literally, absolutely, totally, usually never got that cold. It always got that cold. The pipes always burst. Nobody thought of putting in real pipes, ones that would not burst next time. Burst pipes were an English tradition, like so many others.

Like, for instance, English men. Charm the knickers off you with their mellow vowels and frivolous verbiage, and then, once they'd got them off, panic and run. Or else stay and whinge. The English called it "whinging" instead of whining. It was better, really. Like a creaking hinge. It was a traditional compliment to be whinged at by an Englishman. It was his way of saying he trusted you, he was conferring upon you the privilege of getting to know the real him. The inner, whinging him. That was how they thought of women, really: whinge receptacles. Kat could play it, but that didn't mean she liked it.

She had an advantage over the English women, though: she was of no class. She had no class. She was in a class of her own. She could roll around among the English men, all different kinds of them, secure in the knowledge that she was not being measured against the class yardsticks and accent detectors they carried around in their back pockets, was not subject to the petty snobberies and resentments which lent such richness to their inner lives. The flip side of this freedom was that she was beyond the pale. She was a colonial—how fresh, how vital, how anonymous, how finally of no consequence. Like a hole in the wall, she could be told all secrets and then abandoned with no guilt.

She was too smart, of course. The English men were very competitive; they liked to win. Several times it hurt. Twice she had abortions, because the men in question were not up for the alternative. She learned to say that she didn't want children anyway, that if she longed for a rug rat she would buy a gerbil. Her life began to seem long. Her adrenaline was running out. Soon she would be thirty, and all she could see ahead was more of the same.

THIS was how things were when Gerald turned up. "You're terrific," he said, and she was ready to hear it, even from him, even though "terrific" was a word that had probably gone out with fifties crewcuts. She was ready for his voice by that time, too: the flat, metallic, nasal tone of the Great Lakes, with its clear hard "r"s and its absence of theatricality. Dull normal. The speech of her people. It came to her suddenly that she was an exile.



Gerald was scouting, Gerald was recruiting. He'd heard about her, looked at her work, sought her out. One of the big companies back in Toronto was launching a new fashion-oriented magazine, he said: up-market, international in its coverage, of course, but with some Canadian fashion in it, too, and with lists of stores where the items portrayed could actually be bought. In that respect, they felt they'd have it all over the competition, those American magazines that assumed you could only get Gucci in New York or Los Angeles. Heck, times had changed, you could get it in Edmonton! You could get it in Winnipeg!

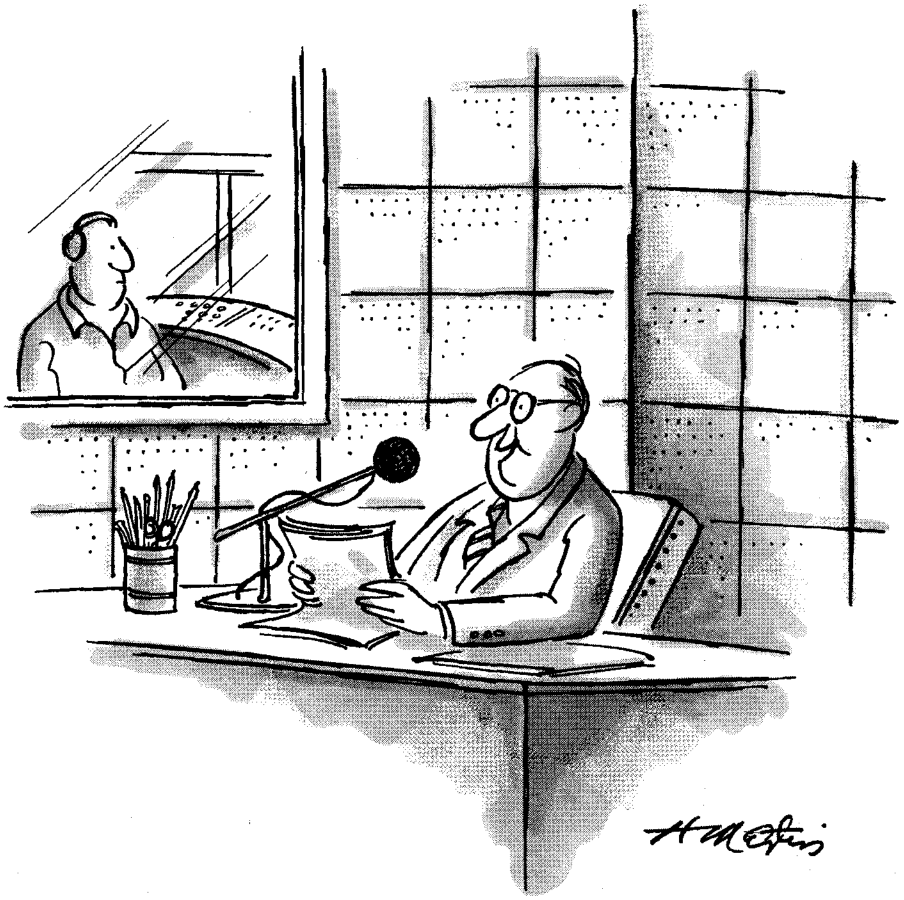
Kat had been away too long. There was Canadian fashion now? The English quip would be to say that "Canadian fashion" was an oxymoron. She refrained from making it, lit a cigarette with her cyanide-green Covent Garden-boutique leather-covered lighter (as featured in the May issue of *the razor's edge*), looked Gerald in the eye. "London is a lot to give up," she said levelly. She glanced around the see-me-here Mayfair restaurant where they were finishing lunch, a restaurant she'd chosen because she'd known he was paying. She'd never spend that kind of money on food otherwise. "Where would I eat?"

Gerald assured her that Toronto was now the restaurant capital of Canada. He himself would be happy to be her guide. There was a great Chinatown, there was world-class Italian. Then he paused, took a breath. "I've been meaning to ask you," he said. "About the name. Is that Kat as in Krazy?" He thought this was suggestive. She'd heard it before.

"No," she said. "It's Kat as in KitKat. That's a chocolate bar. Melts in your mouth." She gave him her stare, quirked her mouth, just a twitch.

Gerald became flustered, but he pushed on. They wanted her, they needed her, they loved her, he said in essence. Someone with her fresh, innovative approach and her experience would be worth a lot of money to them, relatively speaking. But there were rewards other than the money. She would be in on the initial concept, she would have a formative influence, she would have a free hand. He named a sum that made her gasp, inaudibly of course. By now she knew better than to betray desire.

SO she made the journey back, did her three months of culture shock, tried the world-class Italian and the great Chinese, and seduced Gerald at the first opportunity, right in his junior-vice-presidential office. It was the first time Gerald had been seduced in such a location, or perhaps ever. Even though it was after hours, the danger frenzied him. It was the idea of it. The daring. The image of Kat kneeling on the broadloom in a legendary bra that until now he'd seen only in the lingerie ads of the Sunday New York *Times*, unzipping him in full view of the silver-framed engagement portrait of his wife that complemented the impossible ballpoint-pen set on his desk. At that time he was so straight he felt compelled to take off his wedding ring and place it carefully in the ashtray first. The next day he brought her a box of David Wood Food Shop chocolate truffles. They were the best, he told her, anxious that she should recognize their quality. She found the gesture banal, but also sweet. The banality, the sweetness, the hunger to impress: that was Gerald.



"Edwin Davis Cartwright has been made C.E.O. of Bufco International, Truman Dorrance Tressler would like to hear from fellow executive vice-presidents, and Parkinson Trumbull has joined the University Club. And that's it for tonight. This is Willis Carrington Jordan IV saying good night for the Old Boy Network."

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Gerald was the kind of man she wouldn't have bothered with in London. He was not funny, he was not knowledgeable, he had little verbal charm. But he was eager, he was tractable, he was blank paper. Although he was eight years older than she was, he seemed much younger. She took pleasure in his furtive, boyish delight in his own wickedness. And he was so grateful. "I can hardly believe this is happening," he said, more frequently than was necessary and usually in bed.

His wife, whom Kat encountered (and still encounters) at many tedious company events, helped to explain his gratitude. The wife was a priss. Her name was Cheryl. Her hair looked as if she still used big rollers and embalm-your-hairdo spray. Her mind was room-by-room Laura Ashley wallpaper: tiny, unopened pastel buds arranged in straight rows. She probably put on rubber gloves to make love, and checked it off on a list afterwards. One more messy household chore. She looked at Kat as if she'd like to spritz her with air deodorizer. Kat revenged herself by picturing Cheryl's bathrooms: hand towels embroidered with lilies, fuzzy covers on the toilet seats.

The magazine itself got off to a rocky start. Although Kat had lots of lovely money to play with, and although it was a challenge to be working in color, she did not have the free hand Gerald had promised her. She had to contend with the company board of directors, who were all men, who were all accountants or indistinguishable from them, who were cautious and slow as moles.

"It's simple," Kat told them. "You

bombard them with images of what they ought to be, and you make them feel grotty for being the way they are. You're working with the gap between reality and perception. That's why you have to hit them with something new, something they've never seen before, something they aren't. Nothing sells like anxiety."

The board, on the other hand, felt that their readership should simply be offered more of what they already had. More fur, more sumptuous leather, more cashmere. More established names. The board had no sense of improvisation, no wish to take risks, no sporting instincts, no desire to put one over on the readers just for the hell of it. "Fashion is like hunting," Kat told them, hoping to appeal to their male hormones, if any. "It's playful, it's intense, it's predatory. It's blood and guts. It's erotic." But to them it was about good taste. They wanted Dress-for-Success. Kat wanted scattergun ambush.

Everything became a compromise. Kat had wanted to call the magazine *All the Rage*, but the board was put off by the vibrations of anger in the word "rage." They thought it was too feminist, of all things. "It's a *forties* sound," Kat said. "Forties is *back*. Don't you get it?" But they didn't. They wanted to call it *Or*. French for "gold," and blatant enough in its values, but without any base note, as Kat told them. They sawed off at *Felice*, which had qualities each side wanted. It was vaguely French-sounding, it meant "happy" (so much less threatening than "rage"), and, although you couldn't expect the others to notice, for Kat it had a feline bouquet that counteracted the laciness. She had it done in hot pink lipstick-scrawl, which helped some. She could live with it, but it had not been her first love.

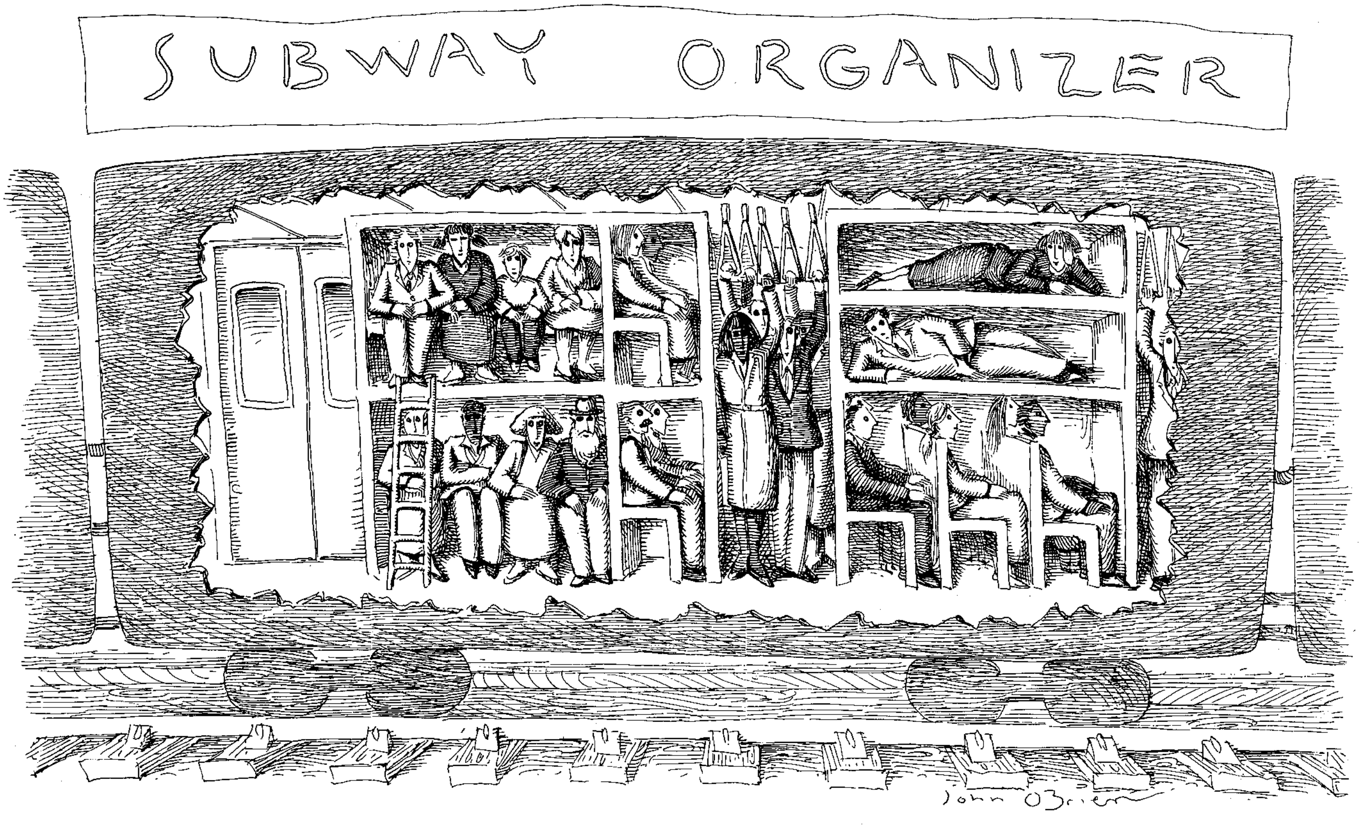
This battle has been fought and refought over every innovation in design, every new angle Kat's tried to bring in, every innocuous bit of semi-kink. There was a big row over a spread that did lingerie, half pulled off and with broken glass perfume bottles strewn on the floor. There was an uproar over the two nouveau-stockinged legs, one tied to the leg of a chair with a third, different-colored stocking. They had not understood the man's three-hundred-dollar leather gloves positioned ambiguously around a neck.

And so it has gone on, for five years.

AFTER Gerald has left, Kat paces her living room. Pace, pace. Her stitches pull. She's not looking forward to her solitary dinner of microwaved leftovers. She's not sure now why she came back here, to this flat burg beside the polluted inland sea. Was it Ger? Ludicrous thought, but no longer out of the question. Is he the reason she stays, despite her growing impatience with him?

He's no longer fully rewarding. They've learned each other too well, they take shortcuts now; their time together has shrunk from whole stolen, rolling, and sensuous afternoons to a few hours snatched between work and dinnertime. She no longer knows what she wants from him. She tells herself she's worth more, she should branch out; but she doesn't see other men, she can't, somehow. She's tried once or twice, but it didn't work. Sometimes she goes out to dinner or a flick with one of the gay designers. She likes the gossip.

Maybe she misses London. She feels caged, in this country, in this city, in this room. She could start with the room, she could open a window. It's too stuffy in here. There's an undertone of formaldehyde, from Hairball's bottle. The flowers she got for the operation are mostly wilted, all except Gerald's from today. Come to think of it, why didn't he send her any at the hospital? Did he forget, or was it a message?



"Hairball," she says, "I wish you could talk. I could have a more intelligent conversation with you than with most of the losers in this turkey farm." Hairball's baby teeth glint in the light; it looks as if it's about to speak.

Kat feels her own forehead. She wonders if she's running a temperature. Something ominous is going on behind her back. There haven't been enough phone calls from the magazine; they've been able to muddle on without her, which is bad news. Reigning queens should never go on vacation, or have operations, either. Uneasy lies the head. She has a sixth sense about these things, she's been involved in enough palace coups to know the signs, she has sensitive antennae for the footfalls of impending treachery.

"__This__ dog has wheels!"

• •

The next morning she pulls herself together, downs an espresso from her mini-machine, picks out an aggressive touch-me-if-you-dare suède outfit in armor gray, and drags herself to the office, although she isn't due in till next week. Surprise, surprise. Whispering knots break up in the corridors, greet her with false welcome as she limps past. She settles herself at her minimalist desk, checks her mail. Her head is pounding, her stitches hurt. Ger gets wind of her arrival; he wants to see her A.S.A.P., and not for lunch.

He awaits her in his newly done wheat-on-white office, with the eighteenth-century desk they chose together, the Victorian inkstand, the framed blowups from the magazine, the hands in maroon leather, wrists manacled with pearls, the Hermès scarf twisted into a blindfold, the model's mouth blossoming lusciously beneath it. Some of her best stuff. He's beautifully done up, in a lick-my-neck silk shirt open at the throat, an eat-your-heart-out Italian silk-and-wool loose knit sweater. Oh, cool insouciance. Oh, eyebrow language. He's a money man who lusted after art, and now he's got some, now he is some. Body art. Her art. She's done her job well; he's finally sexy.

He's smooth as lacquer. "I didn't want to break this to you until next week," he says. He breaks it to her. It's the board of directors. They think she's too bizarre, they think she goes way too far. Nothing he could do about it, although naturally he tried.

Naturally. Betrayal. The monster has turned on its own mad scientist. "I gave you life!" she wants to scream at him.

She isn't in good shape. She can hardly stand. She stands, despite his offer of a chair. She sees now what she's wanted, what she's been missing. Gerald is what she's been missing: the stable, unfashionable, previous, tight-assed Gerald. Not Ger, not the one she's made in her own image. The other one, before he got ruined. The Gerald with a house and a small child and a picture of his wife in a silver frame on his desk. She wants to be in that silver frame. She wants the child. She's been robbed.

"And who is my lucky replacement?" she says. She needs a cigarette, but does not want to reveal her shaking hands.

"Actually, it's me," he says, trying for modesty.

This is too absurd. Gerald couldn't edit a phone book. "You?" she says faintly. She has the good sense not to laugh.

"I've always wanted to get out of the money end of things here," he says, "into the creative area. I knew you'd understand, since it can't be you at any rate. I knew you'd prefer someone who could, well, sort of build on your foundations." Pompous asshole. She looks at his neck. She longs for him, hates herself for it, and is powerless.

The room wavers. He slides toward her across the wheat-colored broadloom, takes her by the gray suède upper arms. "I'll write you a good reference," he says. "Don't worry about that. Of course, we can still see one another. I'd miss our afternoons."

"Of course," she says. He kisses her, a voluptuous kiss, or it would look like one to a third party, and she lets him. *In a pig's ear.*

She makes it home in a taxi. The driver is rude to her and gets away with it; she doesn't have the energy. In her mailbox is an engraved invitation: Ger and Cheryl are having a drinks party, tomorrow evening. Postmarked five days ago. Cheryl is behind the times.

Kat undresses, runs a shallow bath. There's not much to drink around here, there's nothing to sniff or smoke. What an oversight; she's stuck with herself. There are other jobs. There are other men, or that's the theory. Still, something's been ripped out of her. How could this have happened—to her? When knives have been slated for backs, she's always done the stabbing. Any headed her way she's seen coming in time, and thwarted. Maybe she's losing her edge.

She stares into the bathroom mirror, assesses her face in the misted glass. A face of the eighties, a mask face, a bottom-line face; push the weak to the wall and grab what you can. But now it's the nineties. Is she out of style, so soon? She's only thirty-five, and she's already losing track of what people ten years younger are thinking. That could be fatal. As time goes by, she'll have to race faster and faster to keep up, and for what? Part of the life she should have had is just a gap, it isn't there, it's nothing. What can be salvaged from it, what can be redone, what can be done at all?

When she climbs out of the tub after her sponge bath, she almost falls. She has a fever, no doubt about it. Inside her something is leaking, or else festering; she can hear it, like a dripping tap. A running sore, a sore from running so hard. She should go to the emergency ward at some hospital, get herself shot up with antibiotics. Instead, she lurches into the living room, takes Hairball down from the mantelpiece in its bottle, places it on the coffee table. She sits cross-legged, listens. Filaments wave. She can hear a kind of buzz, like bees at work.

She'd asked the doctor if it could have started as a child, a fertilized egg that escaped somehow and got into the wrong place. No, said the doctor. Some people thought this kind of tumor was present in seedling form from birth, or before it. It might be the woman's undeveloped twin. What they really were was unknown. They had many kinds of tissue, though. Even brain tissue. Though of course all of these tissues lack structure.

Still, sitting here on the rug looking in at it, she pictures it as a child. It has come out of her, after all. It is flesh of her flesh. Her child with Gerald, her thwarted child, not allowed to grow normally. Her warped child, taking its revenge.

"Hairball," she says. "You're so ugly. Only a mother could love you." She feels sorry for it. She feels loss. Tears run down her face. Crying is not something she does, not normally, not lately.

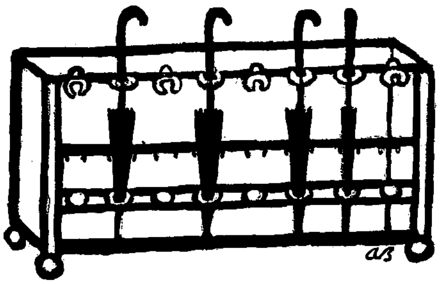
Hairball speaks to her, without words. It is irreducible, it has the texture of reality, it is not an image. What it tells her is everything she's never wanted to hear about herself. This is new knowledge, dark and precious and necessary. It cuts.

She shakes her head. What are you doing, sitting on the floor and talking to a hairball? You are sick, she tells herself. Take a Tylenol and go to bed.

THE next day she feels a little better. Dania from layout calls her and makes dovelike, sympathetic coos at her, and wants to drop by during lunch hour to take a look at her aura. Kat tells her to come off it. Dania gets huffy, and says that Kat's losing her job is a price for immoral behavior in a previous life. Kat tells her to stuff it; anyway, she's done enough immoral behavior in this life to account for the whole thing. "Why are you so full of hate?" asks Dania. She doesn't say it like a point she's making, she sounds truly baffled.

"I don't know," says Kat. It's a straight answer.

After she hangs up she paces the floor. She's crackling inside, like hot fat under the broiler. What she's thinking about is Cheryl, bustling about her cozy house, preparing for the party. Cheryl fiddles with her freeze-framed hair, positions an overloaded vase of flowers, fusses about the caterers. Gerald comes in, kisses her lightly on the cheek. A connubial scene. His conscience is nicely washed. The witch is dead, his foot is on the body, the trophy; he's had his dirty fling, he's ready now for the rest of his life.



Kat takes a taxi to the David Wood Food Shop and buys two dozen chocolate truffles. She has them put into an oversized box, then into an oversized bag with the store logo on it. Then she goes home and takes Hairball out of its bottle. She drains it in the kitchen strainer and pats it damp-dry, tenderly, with paper towels. She sprinkles it with powdered cocoa, which forms a brown pasty crust. It still smells like formaldehyde, so she wraps it in Saran Wrap and then in tinfoil, and then in pink tissue paper, which she ties with a mauve bow. She places it in the David Wood box in a bed of shredded tissue, with the truffles nestled around. She closes the box, tapes it, puts it into the bag, stuffs several sheets of pink paper on top. It's her gift, valuable and dangerous. It's her messenger, but the message it will deliver is its own. It will tell the truth, to whoever asks. It's right that Gerald should have it; after all, it's his child, too.

She prints on the card, "Gerald, Sorry I couldn't be with you. This is all the rage. Love, K."

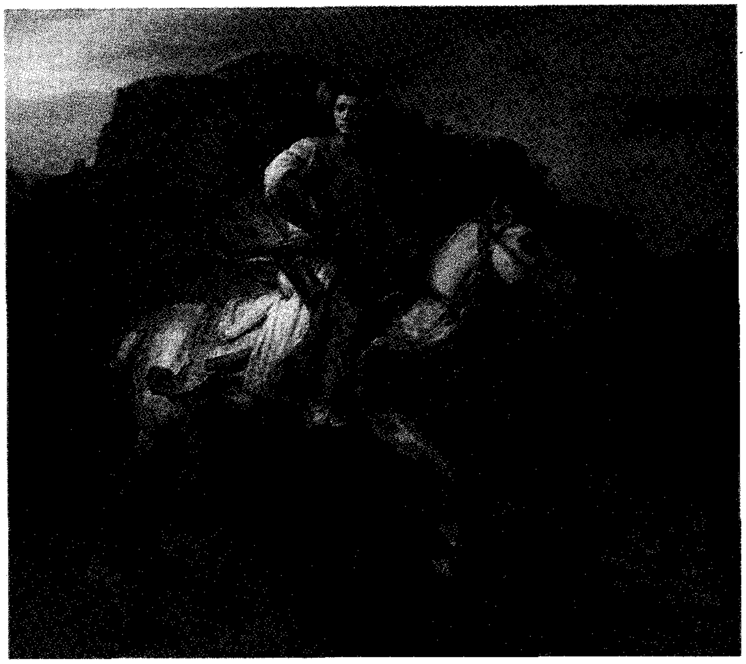
When evening has fallen and the party must be in full swing, she calls a delivery taxi. Cheryl will not distrust anything that arrives in such an expensive bag. She will open it in public, in front of everyone. There will be distress, there will be questions. Secrets will be unearthed. There will be pain. After that, everything will go way too far.

She is not well; her heart is pounding, space is wavering once more. But outside the window it's snowing—the soft, damp, windless flakes of her childhood. She puts on her coat and goes out, foolishly. She intends to walk just to the corner, but when she reaches the corner she goes on. The snow melts against her face like small fingers touching. She has done an outrageous thing, but she doesn't feel guilty. She feels light and peaceful and filled with charity, and temporarily without a name.

—Margaret Atwood

THE ART WORLD

A Young Man on Horseback



©The Frick Collection

AT first glance, the brown-gold light in the sky could be either dawn or twilight. It glows brightest above the left-hand ridge of a rugged hillside, whose summit is dominated by a domed citadel. Under this ridge, a stream tumbles down the dark flank of the hill. In the immediate foreground, a horse steps quickly along from left to right; it is seen from somewhat below, so that, with its rider, it bulks large against the hill. The horse is pale and spectral, has an eager lift to the nose, its eyes are gazing straight ahead, and a fly switch of horsehair flows back under its neck toward the right boot of its rider. The man in the saddle looks out into the distance, with the light falling on his right shoulder and on his elbow, which he holds proudly stuck out. He wears what appears to be military uniform: buff boots, vermillion breeches, long-skirted quilted yellow-gray coat, and fur-trimmed cap with a vermillion cloth crown. He is young, and whatever the anxieties of his mission he gives an impression of being inwardly warmed by the knowledge that his existence is charmed.

Step back. The soft cord, dangling between bronze-capped posts, that surrounds carpet and furniture in the center of the long gallery of the Frick Collection touches the backs of one's legs. The portraits on either side come into view: both very black, by Hals. The wall is covered with green fabric. The green, velvety carpet has been brushed by sweepers or feet into patterns, and suggests a calm sea ruffled by cat's-paws. Gray winter light is filtered down from the skylight. From a distance, certain elements in the painting (which is about four feet high and four and a half feet wide) work differently. The hilly background becomes a high, undulating dark blur. The light in the sky is reflected from five main areas: the right side of the young man's face; his right upper arm and elbow; his right coat skirt and leg; the horse's right flank; and the right side of the horse's neck and head. The vermillion of the young man's hat and breeches is echoed in the less vivid red of the reins. Horse and rider have a determined momentum, seeming to walk out of darkness into light just before stepping into darkness again. Step forward once more and one sees a small plaque affixed to the frame which gives a Frick Collection accession number for the painting, the name of the artist, and the traditional name of the picture: "98. REMBRANDT. POLISH RIDER."

"Still unchanged!" I say to myself. Six years ago, Josua Bruyn, the chairman of the Rembrandt Research Project, which is a team of art scholars working on a multi-volume corpus, or definitive catalogue, of paintings by Rembrandt, suggested—in a book review of another scholar's work—that this painting, "The so-called 'Polish Rider,' " as he referred to it, was by a little-known pupil or follower of Rembrandt, Willem Drost. From the earnest pages of the art-history journal *Oud Holland* the shock waves rippled worldwide, reaching other art historians, museum curators, dealers, auctioneers, collectors, artists, and other people interested in Rembrandt. The first reaction of many was probably not unlike that of Arthur Wheelock, the curator of Northern Baroque painting at the National Gallery, Washington, D. C., and an expert on Dutch seventeenth-century art. Wheelock told me not long ago, "I was stopped in my tracks."

"THE POLISH RIDER" (I will continue to call the painting by its traditional name) came to its place on a gallery wall in Henry Clay Frick's Fifth Avenue mansion after a stay of over a century in Poland. No record of it has been found before 1791. In that year, Michal Kazimierz Ogiński, the grand hetman of Lithuania, who was or had recently been on a trip to Holland, offered it to the last king of Poland, his cousin by marriage. (It has been supposed that Ogiński bought the painting in Holland, but it is possible that he acquired it from some other member or members of the Ogiński family, several of whose forebears had studied in the Low Countries in the seventeenth century.) In 1791, Ogiński wrote to King Stanislaus Augustus:

> Sire,
>
> I am sending Your Majesty a Cossack, whom Reinbrand had set on his horse. This horse has eaten during his stay with me 420 German gulden. Your Majesty's justice and generosity allow me to expect that orange trees will flower in the same proportion.

Ogiński presumably received four hundred and twenty guldens' worth of orange trees from the royal conservatory in exchange for the "Cosaque à Cheval"—the name under which the painting shortly afterward appeared in the King's collection. However, Stanislaus did not last long on the throne (he died in St. Petersburg in 1798), and the "Cosaque" passed into other hands. It belonged to Countess Thérèse Tyszkiewicz, to Prince F. K. Drucki-Lubecki, to Count H. Stroynowski (who was also the Bishop of Wilna), and, later, to his niece Valérie Stroynowska, who married Count Jan Amor Tarnowski. It was hanging in the Tarnowski castle of Dzików in Galicia when scholars from Western Europe apparently first heard of it. The painting made a trip to Vienna and back in 1877, possibly for restoration or to test its sale value. Abraham Bredius, the eminent art historian and director of the Mauritshuis, in The Hague, visited Dzików in 1897, and the painting—"the fine cavalier," Bredius called it—came west for an exhibition of Rembrandt paintings in Amsterdam a year later. By then, the "Cosaque à Cheval" seems to have been adopted by the Poles as one of their own and had begun to be referred to as "The Polish Rider."

In April, 1910, the English writer, painter, and art critic Roger Fry, who was occasionally employed as a picture buyer by wealthy American collectors, wrote to his mother:

> I am very busy just now. I have to go to Poland to buy for Mr. Frick a very important picture.... The owner is a rather stupid country gentleman who insists on selling the picture in his chateau, that's why I have to go and get it, as I must see it before buying. The picture costs £60,000 so it is an important affair.... It's tiresome and rather hateful work but I couldn't refuse to do it.... At all events I ought to get handsomely paid for it, and indeed it comes at a critical time for I am just at the end of my resources.

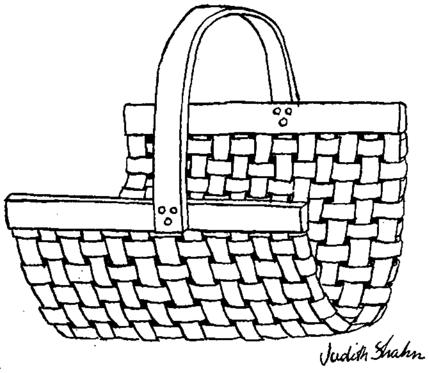
Osbert Sitwell later recalled hearing Fry describe how he had arrived in a remote castle, full of second-rate French furniture and eighteen-eighties objets d'art, and had felt it impossible any real work of art should exist in such surroundings. Then: "Suddenly, a cord was pulled, a curtain was rolled back, and there, before his eyes, was revealed one of the world's masterpieces of painting."

There followed an exchange of telegrams between Fry and Frick and the Paris art dealer Knoedler, one of which read, "KNOEDLER. PARIS. HAVE CABLED FRY TO LET YOU HAVE PICTURE AND HAVE YOU SECURE NEW FRAME. QUITE RIGHT AWFULLY LONELY. FINE WEATHER AND GOLF. FRICK."

Frick's draft on the Morgan bank was for $293,162.50, which may have included a commission for Fry on top of the sixty thousand pounds for Count Tarnowski. The painting was publicly exhibited in London on its way to New York, and a copy was made for the Count by the portrait painter Ambrose McEvoy. (In 1927, there was apparently a serious fire in the Dzików castle, and the copy was lost.) In 1971, Miss Elizabeth Carroll, of 29 Teignmouth Road, London NW2, wrote a letter to the editor of the London *Times* about the sale of "The Polish Rider" to Mr. Frick by her grandfather, Count Tarnowski. "For this 'crime,' he was recently, 35 years after his death, made the subject of most violent public attacks in Warsaw's Communist press by the curator of the Polish National Museum, Dr. Lorenz, who wrote that my grandfather should for this action be put on the nation's 'Black List.' " Presumably, Dr. Lorenz hadn't considered the likelihood that "The Polish Rider" would have been burned to a cinder if Count Tarnowski hadn't sold it to Mr. Frick.

Until the doubts of Josua Bruyn, of the Rembrandt Research Project, appeared in *Oud Holland*, only one art scholar had disagreed in print with the traditional attribution of "The Polish Rider" to Rembrandt. He was A. von Wurzbach, who in 1906, in the first volume of his "Lexicon of Netherlandish Painters," ascribed the painting to Aert de Gelder, the artist who was perhaps Rembrandt's last pupil. Until Bruyn, most Rembrandt experts would have happily gone along with the words of Julius Held, professor emeritus of art history at Barnard College, Columbia University, and author of an extensive iconographic study of "The Polish Rider," which first appeared in the *Art Bulletin* in 1944: "Its fragmentary signature, consisting of an R on a rock at the right, if genuine, proves only what need not be proved, Rembrandt's authorship."

The members of the Rembrandt Research Project are the sort of scholars who do not take much for granted; doubt is fundamental to their enterprise. Five remain of seven scholars who established and constituted the team, in 1968—all Dutch, all men, all



FINGERNAILS

It is the patrimony of reptiles, or of birds,
To possess such pale claws, to sport such
Little flashes of keratin at the farthest tip
Of the grasp. The baby hoatzin has archaic
Claws along its barbarous wings
That boost it into the Peruvian trees;
So, too, our reminiscent hooks
That let our fingertips negotiate
The air, and that curve around so
Obediently, like shields at rest, with
All the snug patience of a carapace,
Snail's armature, or the fastidious
Hermit crab's limping pagoda of shell.
The manicurist lovingly rebukes
The creeping cuticle so that the faint
Crescents, like clouds along horizons,
Reappear. The fingernails are suffused
With the blood's sweet light,
Though the nails of the newly dead
Possess a terrible hailstone
Opacity. The fingernails palisade
The unruly ranks of our willful fingers,
And whenever we clasp our hands
A brief convivial darkness sheathes our nails.

—Eric Ormsby

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TEMPORARY INSANITY

art historians. The two who have died are J. Emmens and J. G. van Gelder. Two current members, S. H. Levie and P. J. J. van Thiel, are, respectively, director-general and curator of paintings at the Rijksmuseum, in Amsterdam, and in recent years their museum responsibilities have made them less active in the Project. The three others are Bob Haak, the former head of the Amsterdam Historical Museum; Bruyn, emeritus professor of art history in the University of Amsterdam; and Ernst van de Wetering, who, at fifty-one, is the youngest member, and who holds Bruyn's old professorial chair.

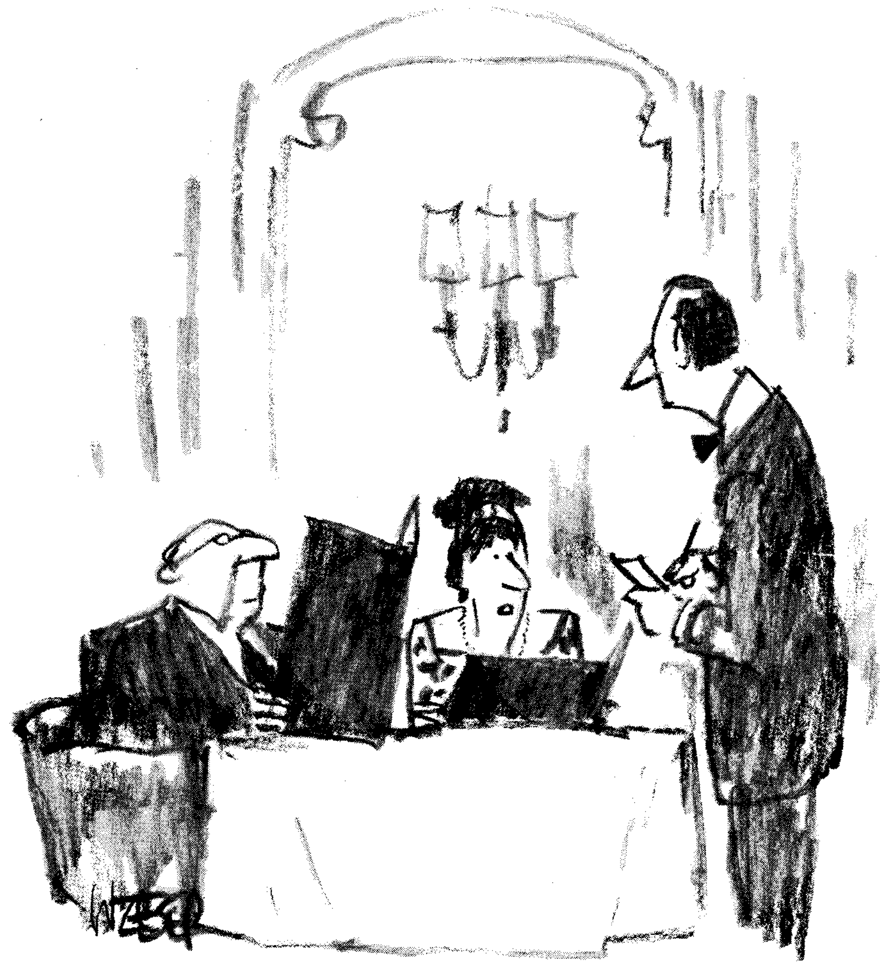
Haak is the founding father of the R.R.P., as it is called. Now sixty-four, the author of a number of books, including a respected biography of Rembrandt and an extensive survey of Dutch seventeenth-century painting, he lives in an early-eighteenth-century house on the Prinsengracht, one of the old canals that encircle the center of Amsterdam, and writes occasional pieces about art for a Dutch financial newspaper. Haak is exceptional among the seven scholars: he has no degree and no title. His hair is gray, cut short. His face is broad-cheeked and weathered—you could imagine him at the helm of a sailing barge. He worked for an art dealer in Amsterdam, then joined the department of painting at the Rijksmuseum. In 1956, he took part in organizing a large exhibition for the three-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of Rembrandt's birth. He says, "The paintings poured in, and we tried to put them in chronological order. I was faced with many paintings said to have been painted by Rembrandt at the same period, and it struck me that one man could not have created so many different sorts of pictures at one time. Many, surely, were not by Rembrandt."

Haak was having doubts that others had had before. In 1792, a French art dealer named Lebrun warned that many paintings claimed as authentic Rembrandts were in fact by his pupils. From early in the Master's career, students had copied his works; sometimes those paintings may have been touched up by Rembrandt. Dealers even in the seventeenth century may have added a Rembrandt signature to such works, and Rembrandt may have done so, too. (Arthur Wheelock says, "Authentic signatures cannot always prove that the painting is by Rembrandt.") The practice was not unusual: Titian and Raphael also signed their pupils' work. Haak, in any event, shared his worries with a dealer friend, Daan Cevat, and Cevat said, "You ought to do something about this. Otherwise it's chaos." Haak began to question the reigning experts. He talked to van Gelder and Bruyn, and both agreed that something had to be done to redefine Rembrandt's œuvre. Haak says, "Bruyn took the helm. He is much cleverer than I am."

The aim of the Project, which Haak thus founded, was to establish for Rembrandt an authentic body of work by conscientious examination, using up-to-date scientific methods of investigation. In 1968, the Project was provided with funds for research, travel, substitute lecturers, and secretarial expenses by the Netherlands Organization for the Advancement of Pure Research. The team members, who were unsalaried, took time from their jobs and looked at some six hundred paintings then thought to be by Rembrandt. They went out in pairs to museums and private collections and made thorough observations and painstaking descriptions of the paintings. Generally, they had a friendly reception and were helped in their work. A few private collectors and smaller museums, however, were suspicious of their intentions. According to Haak, one owner didn't want to let them in, but changed his mind when he realized how serious they were. In several places, they were forced to examine a painting on the wall, in a frame, or under glass. Sometimes they worked in dim light, balancing on a ladder with a hand-held lantern, watched by curious members of the owner's family.

This examination period lasted five years, until 1972. Then the effort to sift the findings and feed in technical evidence began. The team usually met for Friday lunch in an office it had been given in the Central Research Laboratory for Art and Science at the south end of the Museumplein, a five-minute walk from the Rijksmuseum. They ate large quantities of yogurt. Standing on an easel in the room, as if monitoring the discussions, was an enlarged detail of the head and baleful, bandit chief's eye of Rembrandt's "Claudius Civilis."

It was not until 1982 that the team brought forth the first volume of "A



“I’ll have some fish, while the poor things are still around.”

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Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings.” It covered the period from 1625 to 1631, and had the appearance of a massive, old-fashioned family Bible. Volume II, even larger, came out in 1986 and dealt with the years from 1631 to 1634. Volume III, taking us to 1642, the year of “The Night Watch,” has just appeared. With twenty-seven years of Rembrandt’s career still to digest, and at least two more volumes needed to handle it, the team’s work will probably not be finished before the turn of the century. It is not known which of the volumes yet to come will embrace 1655, when “The Polish Rider” is thought to have been painted, and will publish the Project’s verdict on the picture; it is probably at least eight years away.

THE two members of the R.R.P. who studied “The Polish Rider” were Bob Haak and Josua Bruyn. The year was 1969. For the sake of economy and convenience, the team worked geographically rather than chronologically—in this case, looking at all the paintings in and around New York which were attributed to Rembrandt, whether they were thought to be early, middle, or late works. Haak and Bruyn stayed with friends. They had only amateur photographic equipment, and counted on museums and owners to provide detailed photographs. At the Frick, they were allowed to work upstairs in private rooms, with “The Polish Rider” and two other Rembrandts in the collection removed from their frames and placed on easels. The two men were able to take their jackets off and spread their notes on the floor. They spent hours with the “Portrait of Nicolaes Ruts,” painted in 1631; with “The Polish Rider”; and with the “Self-Portrait” of 1658. William Suhr, the Frick’s conservator, was on hand to answer questions about the condition of the pictures. Recalling those days, Josua Bruyn told me not long ago, “It was an experience to see a picture off the wall, out of the frame, and away from the slightly sanctifying atmosphere a gallery gives it. You could look at it in more of a vacuum. In such circumstances, a lesser picture will lose much of its authority, its weaknesses laid bare. A good picture may gain.” (Haak had seen “The Polish Rider” on an earlier visit to New York, and had already felt that it had weaknesses.) Not long after the R.R.P. pair returned to Amsterdam, the Frick helpfully sent Bruyn some twenty photographs he had requested; eleven were of “The Polish Rider.”

JOSUA BRUYN has been chairman of the Rembrandt Research Project foundation and effective leader of the team for almost twenty-two years. He is sixty-six, an Amsterdammer by birth, a tall man with a courteous, formal manner which could be that of a distinguished surgeon or judge. He did his doctoral dissertation on van Eyck, but, like many art historians in Holland, found it impossible to avoid the seventeenth century. His chief aide on the R.R.P. for some time has been Ernst van de Wetering, who served as a junior researcher before becoming a full member of the team. Van de Wetering’s admiration for Bruyn’s stamina is great: “He has been the motor of the Project.” But Bruyn admits that he did not realize at the start how much time and labor would be involved. “Fifteen years would have been all right,” he says. “But twenty—and more than twenty! It has gone on too long.”

Previous attempts to catalogue Rembrant’s œuvre were made by connoisseurs working on their own. An early contribution was that of John Smith, an Englishman, who, without actually seeing many of the originals, in the eighteen-thirties accepted six hundred and fourteen paintings as authentic Rembrandts. In 1913, the Dutch scholar Cornelis Hofstede de Groot published a catalogue raising the figure to nine hundred and eighty-eight. The trend has since been downward. In 1923, John van Dyke, a professor of art history at Rutgers College and something of a wild card in this business, did the most reductionist job on the Master to date, granting him only forty-eight paintings. A less radical œuvre was that catalogued by Abra-

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COURVOISIER
COGNAC

Sometimes, romance needs a little nudge.

COURVOISIER

Le Cognac de Napoleon

ham Bredius in 1935, which accepted six hundred and thirty. Horst Gerson, also Dutch, in 1968 brought the total of accepted paintings down to four hundred and twenty. The Rembrandt Research Project looks like rejecting roughly a hundred and twenty of these. A characteristic of many previous connoisseurs in the field has been to pick and choose without giving convincing reasons for their choice. Haak says, "Gerson threw out many paintings but didn't say why." The "Corpus" of the R.R.P. goes to the other extreme, giving thread counts of the woof and warp of canvases, detailing the provenance of pictures, providing long quotations from sale catalogues, including dissertations on such subjects as the painting of lace and the value of Rembrandt signatures, and considering at length for each painting how the painter has approached the theme, handled the paint, and arrived at a color scheme. The paintings are arranged in three categories: A's are those paintings which are undoubtedly by Rembrandt; B's those on which no absolute decision has been reached; and C's those which the team concludes are not by the Master and are therefore de-attributed, disattributed, demoted, or rejected. The three published volumes of the "Corpus" contain a hundred and forty-four A's, twelve B's (seven in Volume I, one in Volume II, and four in Volume III), and a hundred and twenty C's.

This severity of judgment reflects Josua Bruyn's intentions. The number of cases in which decisions about authenticity have been left open is "fairly small," the "Corpus" notes, and it explains, "This can be seen as an indication that there has been an urge to express firm opinions. In this respect, this book is in the tradition of œuvre catalogues that present a solid body of accepted works and just as solid a body of rejected paintings, in a situation where in fact there is always room for discussion and reconsideration." The final statement is seen by some as disingenuous. The size, presentation, and *gravitas* of the "Corpus" give the impression of leaving very little room. (*The Burlington,* the leading British art journal, noted in an editorial generally welcoming Volume I that the weighty tome was not good for reading in bed, particularly if the bed was shared with a partner.) Yet the first volume was, for the most part, well received, the team's hard work admired, and little exception taken to the weeding out of Rembrandt's work of that period; indeed, a few experts wondered why the team had bothered to consider a number of paintings that nowadays were not seriously regarded as Rembrandts by most contemporary scholars in the field. (This criticism the R.R.P. apparently took to heart: in Volume II they announced that they were shifting the basis of their work from Bredius' choice to Gerson's smaller total of attributions.) Although there were signs in Volume I that the team had a constrained view of Rembrandt, opposition took time to form. When it did, some critics expressed suspicion of the team's methodology; others proceeded from anxieties about individual paintings—on which the team was known or suspected to hold strong opinions—to concern for the team's over-all judgment. Now controversy seems to be expanding far faster than the R.R.P.'s "Corpus."

IT is generally agreed that, even for so diverse an artist as Rembrandt, "The Polish Rider"—which Bruyn recognizes as "un tableau de légende"—would be an unusual picture. Painter of portraits, Biblical studies, history pieces, and a few landscapes, Rembrandt did not produce many equestrian pictures. Only one other full-scale picture of a man on a horse is attributed to Rembrandt: the large portrait of Frederik Rihel (in the National Gallery, London), where Rihel is dressed in civic-guard finery and mounted on a prancing gray steed. Despite having both forelegs in the air, this horse is curiously inanimate; it might be a merry-go-round horse, a studio prop. (If the painting is indeed a Rembrandt—or mostly a Rembrandt—Rihel's horse might well be an instance of student help.)

In "The Polish Rider," the horse—an elderly stallion—is a serving horse, not a parade horse. Kenneth Clark saw in this a recognition by Rembrandt "that full, round curves had become one of the deceptive clichés of classical art. . . . The horses in Rubens or in Velásquez' portrait of the Duke of Olivares assert by their great curves the power of their riders. No doubt 17th-century horses really did have much heavier hindquarters than show jumpers have today, but even so, there is an element of symbolism in these powerful arcs. This was precisely the assertiveness against which Rembrandt all his life was in rebellion."

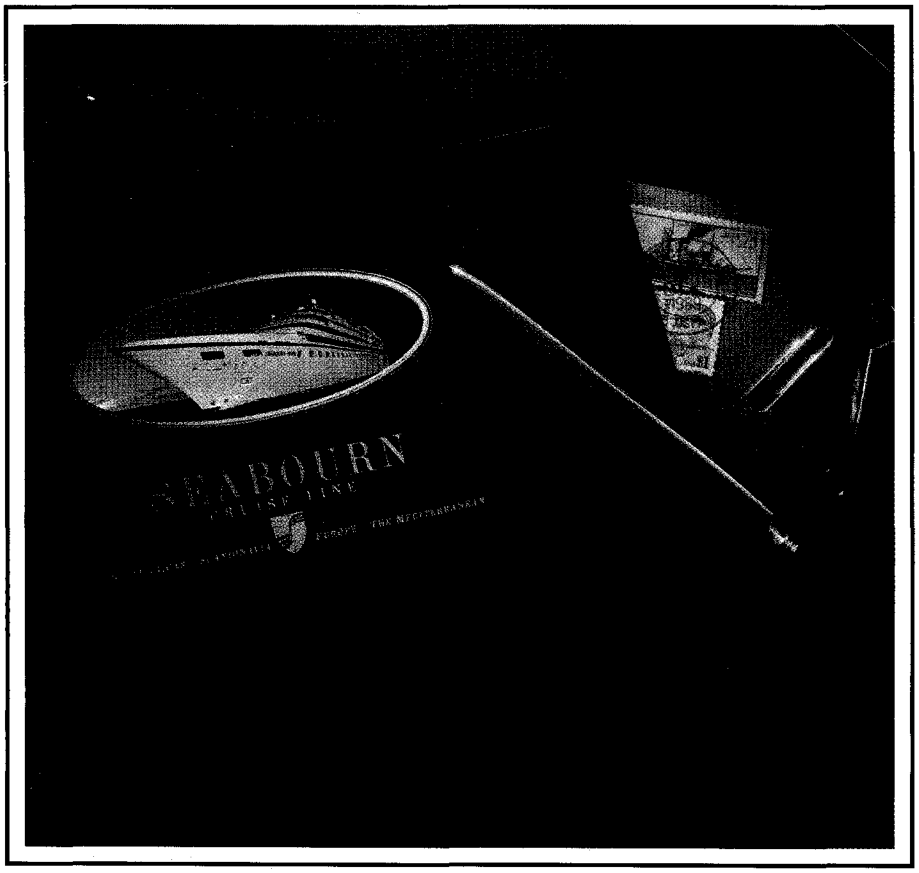
The horse of "The Polish Rider" seems to be haunted by a horse that was mentioned by the British scholar A. M. Hind in his 1932 book on Rembrandt: "a drawing of a skeleton of a horse at Darmstadt which might even have been done with a view to the Polish Rider." Julius Held has worked out that this drawing—unanimously accepted as a Rembrandt—was done of a skeletal horse and skeletal rider in the anatomical theatre of Leiden University, which Rembrandt may have visited in connection with work on his "Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Deyman." As Held notes, the Darmstadt drawing and the Frick painting have many striking similarities:

> In both, the group is seen from a low eye level. In the drawing, this is evident from the position of the feet of the rider and the relationship of his shoulder to his neck; it is equally obvious in the Frick canvas if we look at the relative position of the shoulders or notice the sole of the shoe. . . . The cropped tail of the Frick picture, an uncommon feature at that time, exactly corresponds in length to the tail-bones seen in the drawing. . . . All this results in the feeling that the horse of the painting has literally been brought back from the dead but still betrays his macabre origin in his bony appearance and pale color.

As for the identity of the horse's rider, there are about twenty theories. Held discovered among Polish scholarly accounts of the picture a reference to its having been seen at Dzików in 1842 by the Polish poet and patriot Kajetan Koźmian, and to Koźmian's having suggested that the rider might have been an officer in a mercenary regiment led—in the early seventeenth century—by a Polish condottiere named Alexander Lisowski. Koźmian appears to have encouraged a tradition which other scholars accepted without question. Similarly, the German Wilhelm von Bode called the rider "a Polish magnate." One problem with the Polish connection, noted by Held, is the young rider's lack of a mustache, for a mustache is alleged to have been de rigueur for seventeenth-century Poles (and, indeed, remains so for many Poles today). The rider's clothing is thought by the Polish costume historian Z. Żygulski to be wholly Polish, but Held considers it to be much like that worn by assorted Eastern European light horsemen—"Hungarians and Poles alike." Yet any discussion of the rider's costume should be qualified by the recognition that Rembrandt was not known for historical exactitude when it came to dressing his characters. Colin Campbell, a British art historian, writes, "His biblical characters are often to be found dressed arbitrarily in costume of widely varying origins: Turkish, Persian, or Indian, for example." (The dress he wears in the 1658 self-portrait makes him look like a Venetian nobleman—or, some think, like a Dutch burgher affecting to be Zeus.) Although some students of the subject, like Żygulski, believe that the apparent homogeneity of clothing in "The Polish Rider" puts the painting in the realm of portraiture, for Rembrandt the Polish costume might have had nothing to do with a Polish subject.

Mustached or not, the "Rider" has been given further Polish connections by Jan Białostocki, a Polish art historian: he has traced cultural links between Poland and Holland in the seventeenth century, and contacts between Rembrandt and various Poles. When Rembrandt first came to Amsterdam, he lived and worked with the art dealer Hendrick van Uylenburgh, who was probably born in Poland, and whose father—or grandfather, according to others—was the Polish royal cabinetmaker. (One of many portraits done by Rembrandt in those first, busy Amsterdam years is "A Polish Nobleman," now in the National Gallery, Washington.) Through Hendrick van Uylenburgh, Rembrandt met Hendrick's Frisian cousin, Saskia, and he married her. Saskia's sister Antje married a Polish Calvinist theologian, Jan Makowski, who was professor of theology at Franeker University (and was also known for holding wild late-night parties with his students). Van Uylenburgh was a member of the Anabaptist sect called Mennonites, a number of whom had travelled from the west to settle in Poland in the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century, many Mennonites moved from Poland to Holland, presumably attracted by Dutch tolerance and living standards. (I doubt if Henry Clay Frick was aware of Rembrandt's Mennonite contacts, but Frick's mother had Mennonite forebears in the Rhineland Palatinate.) A related group of anti-Trinitarian dissidents, the Socinians, or Polish Brethren, also migrated to Holland. Białostocki suggests that "The Polish Rider" is an image of a fighter for religious freedom, perhaps related to Jonasz Szlichtyng, a Socinian Pole who took refuge in Holland, and whose treatise on religious toleration and the separation of religious and state affairs was published in Amsterdam in 1654.

Another art historian, a Dutchman named Ben Broos, has recently proposed that "The Polish Rider" is an actual portrait of a member of the Ogiński family. Two Ogińskis were in the Netherlands in the mid-seventeenth



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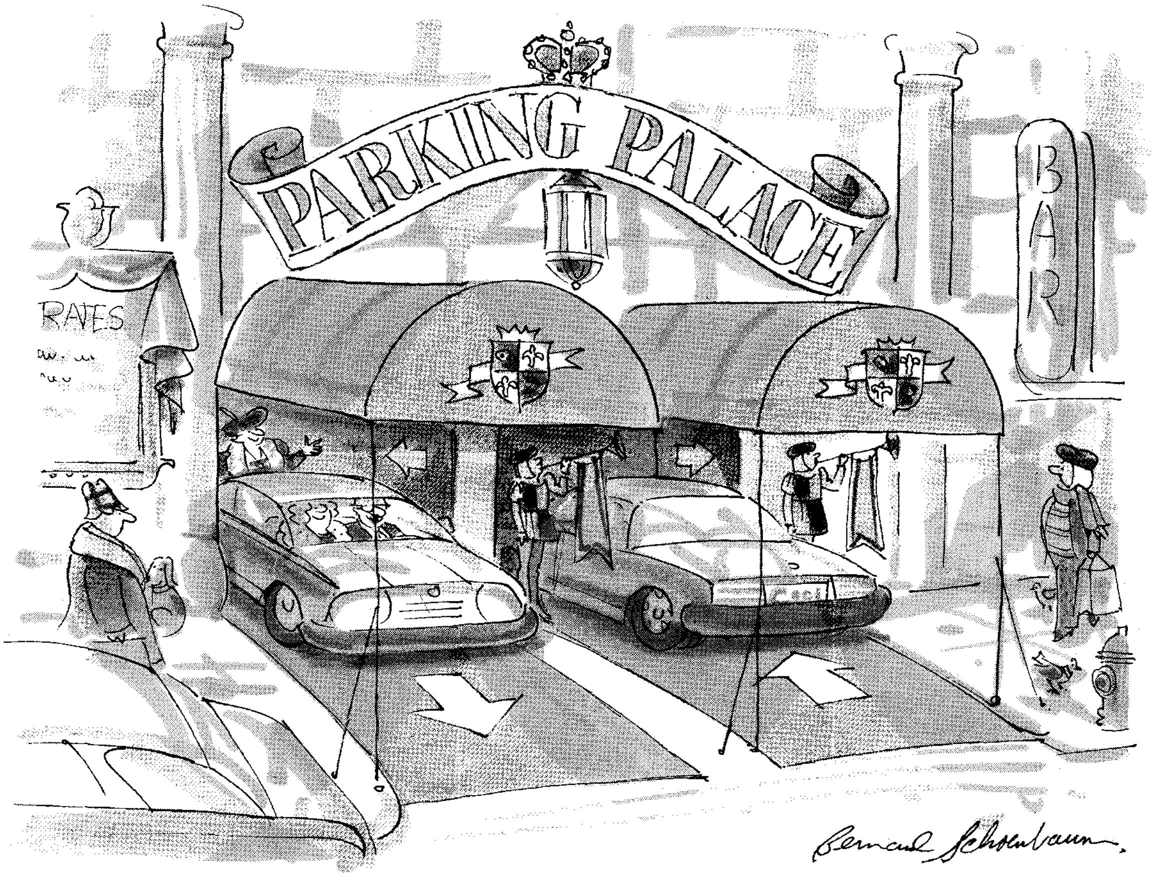

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century, studying at Leiden and Franeker. The Ogiński name, Broos says, can be translated as "of the fire," and he suggests that a campfire in the right background of the picture is an emblematic reference to the sitter's name. Moreover, the rider's full quiver is seen as a token of nobility. Of the two Ogińskis, Broos plumps for Simon C. Ogiński, who married a Dutchwoman and had three children by her. But Julius Held has lately pointed out that Szymon Ogiński was thirty-four in 1655, hardly a youth.

Much scholarly effort has also gone into finding pictorial and literary connections for "The Polish Rider." Artists whose prints of mounted warriors may well have influenced the painting include Stefano della Bella, an Italian who visited Amsterdam in 1647 and admired Rembrandt's work; Albrecht Dürer, whose engraving "Knight, Death, and the Devil" was widely known; and Lucas Cranach, whose 1506 woodcut "A Saxon Prince on Horseback" shows a young man on a horse, also moving from left to right, with a steep hillside behind. Kenneth Clark has observed in the steed of "The Polish Rider" a reflection of the horse ridden by Death in Dürer's print of "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse."

The Bible has been proposed as a source for the subject of the painting. The rider has been variously identified as Absalom, the young David, the Prodigal Son, and even Christ on His Second Coming. Seventeenth-century Dutch dramas have provided other theories. The German museum director W. R. Valentiner thought that the rider might represent Gysbrecht van Amstel. This mythical Dutch hero of the Middle Ages is the subject of a play by the Dutch poet Joost Van den Vondel that was and still is frequently performed in Amsterdam, and was thus presumably familiar to Rembrandt. (A bonus here is that Gysbrecht eventually fled to Poland; a drawback is that he was an old man when he did so.) Yet another play has been suggested by Gary Schwartz, a forty-nine-year-old native New Yorker, long resident in Holland, who has written a biographical study, "Rembrandt/His Life, His Paintings." This is the melodrama "Tamerlane," by Joannes Serwouters, which was put on in Amsterdam in September of 1657, starring an actor named Gillis Nooseman (whose props, according to Schwartz, included Polish costumes), and with a live horse being ridden onstage. The painting may therefore be of Tamerlane in pursuit of Bayazet, the Turkish sultan whom the Mongol chief overthrew in 1402. The painting would thus be of a Mongolian rider, even if in Polish costume, which Schwartz thinks made it easier to sell the painting to M. K. Ogiński in the late eighteenth century. (This theory has been dismissed by Peter Sutton of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, in his review in *The Burlington* of Schwartz' book. Sutton writes, "Serwouters' melodrama . . . never describes such a scene, and, typically, offers no direction for its staging; Schwartz freely infers it from the dialogue and the fact that a live horse is known to have been used in the play, but only certainly in a later equestrian scene.")

One other drama that has been put forward is "Sigismund, Prince of Poland," which was also produced in Amsterdam in the sixteen-fifties. In this play, one of the characters is a woman who dons armor and disguises herself as a man in order to go to war. In fact, several observers have noticed a feminine quality in the young person on horseback. Kenneth Clark says that the rider "has an almost feminine beauty." He suggested that the artist had used the model who also posed for "Potiphar's Wife" in two versions he did of that Biblical story. But although Rembrandt painted two other pictures around that time in which the sex of the character is disputed (one now in Glasgow, the second in Lisbon, both representing either Alexander or Pallas Athena), the Polish rider looks much more like the Joseph than the woman in the 1655 "Potiphar's Wife" in the Washington National Gallery.

A more frequent and more specific proposal has been that Rembrandt's model for "The Polish Rider" was his son, Titus. Several Polish scholars have seen Titus in the rider, and so did the English painter Walter Sickert, though he thought that the head was based on "drawings, and from a memory of expression and character"—words suggesting that he believed Titus was dead when the painting was made. But Titus was fourteen in 1655, and if the painting was done around that year, as all seem to agree it was, then Titus would have been too young for the rider. Yet the young man looks a good deal like an older version of the boy we think of as Titus, who appears in numerous drawings and paintings by Rembrandt, portrayed with parental affection. One picture, painted about this time, that comes to mind is of Titus sitting at his desk—a work in which the modelling and paint handling of hair, flesh, eyebrows, eyes, lips, and the right side of the face with the light falling on it bear a strong resemblance to those of the Polish rider's, even if in the rider certain features, such as cheeks and chin, are differently—perhaps just more maturely—shaped.

One other feature of "The Polish Rider" may be worth noting: its sense of mission. The youth has the air of riding forth in search of his destiny. Kenneth Clark writes, "His gaze, like that of his horse, is focused on some unattainable objective." For Julius Held, in 1944, the young rider could be taken at one level for a *Grenswacht*, or border guard, but beyond that he was "obviously an idealized figure, a glorified representative of a whole military group"—that is, Christian warriors fighting infidels like Turks and Tatars. "The spirit of the Crusades indeed still sheds a last gleam of light on the youth in Rembrandt's painting," Held says.

A last word on the "subject" of "The Polish Rider": the Amsterdam playwright Gerbrand Bredero, who started his working life as a painter's apprentice, has a character in his 1613 comedy, "The Miller's Farce," say, "Painters just paint any old thing that pops into their head."

WHAT popped into the painter's head and what thereafter materialized out of the painter's efforts to express this idea, yearning, or burden in paint, on canvas or panel, framed and hung on a gallery wall, may at some point interest art historians. With the passage of time, connections in the form of documents and provenance often become frail, or fail altogether. An art historian may then find useful employment in saying "So-and-So did this work," or "So-and-So did not." This can change the value of the picture, depending on the standing of "So-and-So." Experts have done well from their expertise. But it can be seen immediately that for the Rembrandt Research Project, which has gone in for de-attributions of a great master's work, there is no percentage in it.

In the past, connoisseurship—the skill of looking closely at a work of art, and at the process of its creation—has been very much a single-handed craft, and dependent on one primary tool, the trained eye. It has also been one in which the gifted amateur has often made a contribution. A particularly influential amateur was Giovanni Morelli, an Italian physician and, in the eighteen-sixties, Italian nationalist who became an expert on Renaissance art. Morelli's approach to paintings sprang from his medical training, and concentrated on the different ways in which artists delineated various parts of the human body—ears, hands, and so on. The study of these forms, Morelli wrote, can "aid us in distinguishing the works of a master from those of his imitators, and control the judgment which subjective impressions might lead us to pronounce."

Morellian methods of connoisseurship are still practiced by members of the R.R.P. One common, seemingly unimportant area of a composition which the team regards as significant for the identification of Rembrandt is the way in which lace collars and cuffs are painted. Some observers find it surprising—and others find it illuminating—that the R.R.P. should admit to such reliance on what is, after all, the tool of old-fashioned connoisseurship and employ such traditional terminology of the profession as "loosely painted" and "refined handling," when the team's original platform was to use "up-to-date methods of investigation" in the service of a "radical revision of the Rembrandt canon."

Some up-to-date methods have certainly been employed. The Project has made close examination of canvases, to determine the density of threads and the presence of cusping, which is a scalloping sort of deformation that a stretched canvas may show along its

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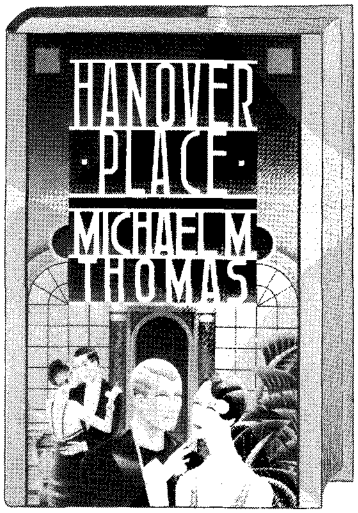

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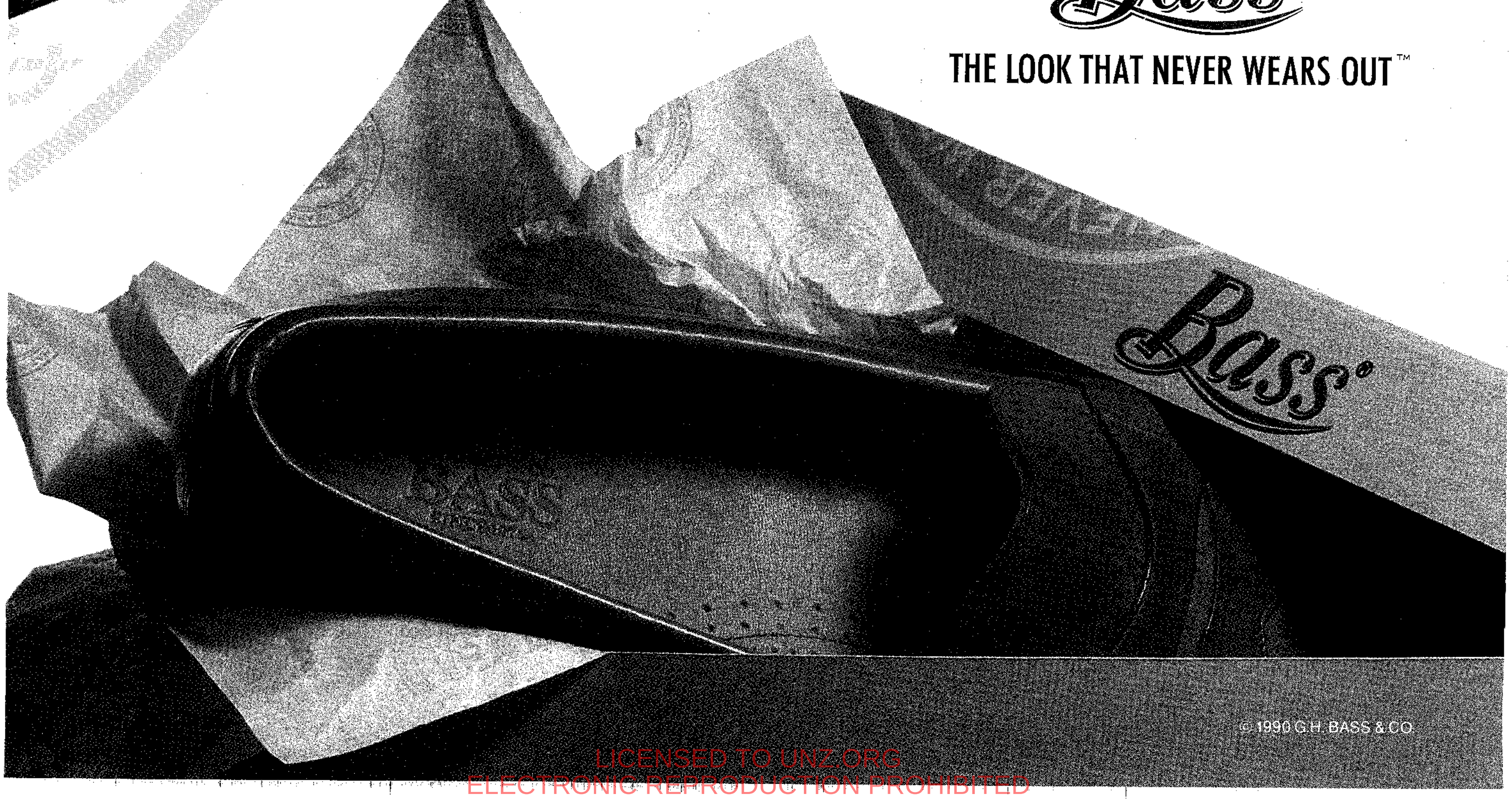

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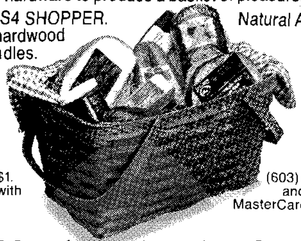

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edges if the canvas is original and of the original size. The team has also used such scientific aids as dendrochronology, to discover the date of the wood used in panels that pictures have been painted on; chemical and microscopic analyses of minute paint samples, which show the various layers of paint and the basic ground; and photography with infrared and ultraviolet light, and with X rays, which show certain layers of underpainting. (X rays, however, detect only the distribution of lead-white and lead-based pigment, and thus provide only a fairly simple view of only one aspect of groundwork.) For much of this assistance the R.R.P. has depended on work already done by museums, like that at the National Gallery, London, which has been looking closely at its own Rembrandts to discover how the artist prepared his canvases and panels and laid on the paint, and displayed its findings at a 1988-89 exhibition called "Art in the Making." The enlargements of tiny paint fragments looked like colorful bacteria under a microscope; in some of them one could see, for example, how little vermillion—which was expensive—was needed to give the effect of red.

Probably the most sophisticated scientific analysis of the structure of a painting is furnished by autoradiography. In this process, the painting is bombarded with radioactivity and then covered with film, and the film is removed in stages over a number of days, providing readings on many different layers of the paint. This procedure has been undertaken so far by only a few museums, such as the Gemäldegalerie, in Berlin, and the Metropolitan, in New York, which have access to nuclear-research facilities. (The Metropolitan's work was done at Brookhaven National Laboratory, on Long Island.) Maryan Ainsworth, a research fellow at the Metropolitan, believes that the procedure is helpful in giving evidence of an artist's working methods and enables a more comprehensive study to be made of the character of brushstrokes—part of the artist's "handwriting"—which may have darkened and become less legible over time. Some Rembrandt paintings that have been put through this treatment have revealed preliminary, below-the-surface sketches that are remarkably similar to the artist's pen-and-wash drawings.

The Rembrandt Research Project, in any event, seems to be backing off from its early commitment to scientific analysis. It is in dispute with the Metropolitan about the authenticity of two portraits, which, partly on the basis of autoradiographs, the Metropolitan is sure are by Rembrandt and, partly on the basis of such Morellian details as lace, the R.R.P. is sure are not. In Volume II of the "Corpus" Ernst van de Wetering writes, at the end of his chapter on analyses of canvas, that this sort of research takes an enormous amount of time and energy, and does not always pay off. Christopher Brown and his associates of the National Gallery, London, writes in his "Art in the Making" catalogue, "Technical investigation can assist in matters of attribution, but only to a limited extent and should not be regarded as a panacea. Scientific examination will, broadly, establish the outer limits within which the art historian must work. It can identify later copies and recent fakes, and it can establish conventional patterns of procedure. However, the very nature of the apprenticeship system in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century meant that the pupil would adopt his master's method of working, and so it is rare that technical analysis can help us distinguish between the two."

PUPILS and master: we arrive at the prickly, all-important subject of Rembrandt's school, or workshop—of his students, assistants, and followers. Estimates of the size of Rembrandt's œuvre are obviously affected by the number of Rembrandtesque works that can be convincingly attributed to some of the more than fifty artists who studied and worked with him; and such estimates are all the more meaningful if the artists to whom works are reattributed can be named. Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, of the Institute of Fine Arts in New York, says, "In the nineteenth century, the whole idea of genius precluded the assumption that any of these Rembrandtesque works were by anyone other than Rembrandt." Bob Haak says, "The idea of Rembrandt's school is something that has developed over the past twenty years. Many pictures I thought were eighteenth- or nineteenth-century imitations turn out to be by his pupils." Haak's first statement is a little hard on John van Dyke, who in 1923, believing that "the works of the pupils are given to the master, which do not enrich him but make the pupils poor indeed," carved the essential Rembrandt œuvre down to forty-eight paintings. But van Dyke was flying against the generally inflationary tendency of his time, and Haak is right to the extent that the Rembrandt school has received a good deal of scholarly attention in recent years, and has proved important in the winnowing process.

Who are these artists who are being dragged out from under the Master's enormous shadow? The R.R.P. notes in Volume II of its "Corpus," "No contemporaneous rollcall of the 'population' of Rembrandt's workshop has survived." The longest list of those associated with him was that given by Arnold Houbraken, whose "De Groote Schoubugh," of 1718-21, is an indispensable source for the lives of seventeenth-century Dutch artists. Houbraken was presumably working from evidence furnished by many who had known Rembrandt or known some of his pupils, but that was almost half a century after Rembrandt's death. A contemporary witness was Joachim von Sandrart, a German painter and writer on art who was in Amsterdam in the early sixteen-forties. In his "Teutsche Academie" (1675–79) von Sandrart wrote that Rembrandt's house "was crowded with almost innumerable young men who came for instruction and teaching." They came from various countries in Europe as well as from the Netherlands, and generally paid a hundred guilders a year for the privilege. From 1637 to 1645, Rembrandt's need for workshop space was such that he rented a warehouse. There, according to Houbraken, "each of his pupils had a space for himself, separated by paper or canvas, so that they could paint from life without bothering each other." Rembrandt, like other painters with pupils, traded in their work; apprentice work involved making copies of the Master's paintings, and the copies were sometimes signed by the Master. In the late sixteen-forties and the sixteen-fifties, Rembrandt had fewer pupils, and they were apparently accommodated in his large house on the Breestraat. When it was eventually sold, a clause in the deed stated, "The owner will take with him two stoves . . . and various partitions, set up in the attic for his pupils." A drawing by one of his pupils shows

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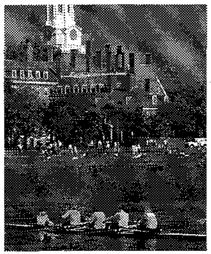

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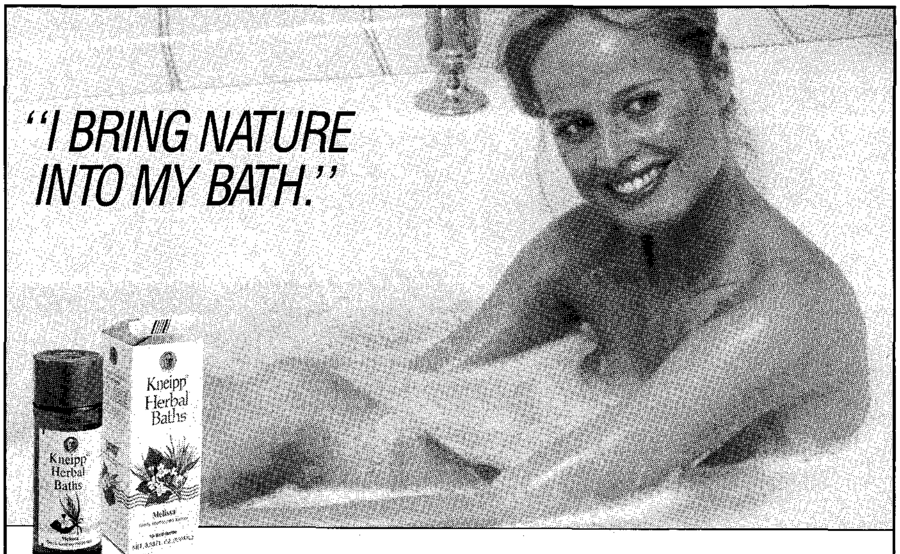

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Rembrandt conducting a life class: the model on a low plinth, pupils leaning against the wall or squatting as they draw, and the Master, in his working beret, casting an eye over their work.

Some of those who worked alongside Rembrandt have had recognition for some time. Jan Lievens, Rembrandt's colleague during his first years in Leiden, was praised as Rembrandt's equal by Constantijn Huygens, art patron and secretary to the stadtholder Prince Frederik Hendrick. Gerard Dou, perhaps Rembrandt's first pupil, soon developed a fine, polished style of his own. The training of another early apprentice, Isaac de Jouderville, is documented in the shape of receipts for his tuition fees from 1629 through 1631, but his identified work has no individual brilliance. Govert Flinck, one of Rembrandt's most talented students, painted at least one portrait that was sold as a Rembrandt, but went on, like such other pupils as Ferdinand Bol, to acquire his own patrons and, indeed, great prosperity. Carel Fabritius and Nicolas Maes were also among the most talented graduates of the Rembrandt workshop, and the work of Fabritius, particularly, shines in an independent, idiosyncratic light. Rembrandt's last pupil, Aert de Gelder, went on painting in the late, broad-brushstroke manner of the Master, using a similar closetful of costumes and weaponry—possibly an act of reverence, though de Gelder's own affectionate personality comes through in many of his pictures.

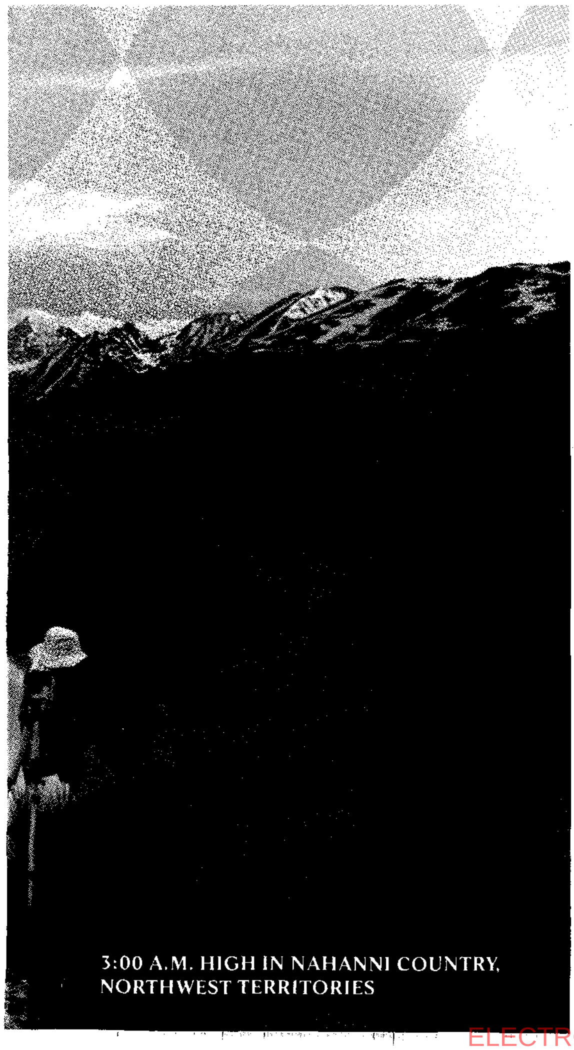
The effort to disentangle the work of student from that of teacher was pioneered in this century by John van Dyke. Van Dyke reattributed the great "Danaë," in the Hermitage, to a pupil named Gerrit Willemz Horst; various "Saskia"s to Govert Flinck; the "Woman Bathing," in the National Gallery, London, to a pupil named Gerbrand van den Eeckhout; the "Sibyl," at the Metropolitan, to Willem Drost; and "The Man with the Golden Helmet," in Berlin ("a masterpiece that suggests Rembrandt in not the smallest way"), to Aert de Gelder. Although van Dyke visited the Frick Collection, saw the 1658 "Self-Portrait," and allowed it to Rembrandt, he did not, for unexplained reasons, refer to "The Polish Rider" one way or the other. More recently, the German scholar Werner Sumowski has brought forth a series of detailed volumes on the works of the Rembrandt school, with illustrations of works he believes to be by Rembrandt's pupils and followers. Ben Broos, at the Mauritshuis, has written an essay about his own preliminary work in examining documents and sources concerned with the pupils, and has compiled a fairly comprehensive list of their names. Out of this sort of endeavor has developed greater knowledge of the careers and the artistic personalities of some of the pupils—"personality" being a term favored by connoisseurs, and intended to connote the sum of identifiable characteristics to be found in an artist's work. If, occasionally, one might be tempted to think that interest in minor seventeenth-century Dutch painters is growing in proportion to the numbers of fledgling art historians, it is still the case that names are known of artists of that time who at present have no works credited to them. Fairness to their ghosts might seem to justify attempts to connect them with paintings they created.

Between those who say "Rembrandt did it" and those who reply "No, such-and-such a pupil did" lies a middle ground, which doesn't get much prominence, although now and then an art historian may draw attention to it. One such is Arthur Wheelock. His view is that there may have been a good deal of collaboration between master and assistants. Wheelock points out that in the inventory made of Rembrandt's collection in 1656, at the time of his insolvency, seven paintings were described as "reworked by Rembrandt." He believes that Rembrandt may have asked a specialist in depicting lace to assist with some portraits. Although no documents have been found to prove such collaboration, Rembrandt is known to have been influenced by Rubens—his style, his way of life, his fame—and may well have managed his workshop in the manner Rubens did; for instance, he may have hired graphic artists to make prints after his compositions. Wheelock says, "We know that Rubens frequently collaborated with his assistants. I suspect that Rembrandt did as well, and probably at all phases of his career. Lievens, Flinck, Bol, and de Gelder are all distinguished artists from Rembrandt's orbit who could well have worked on paintings with the Master." Wheelock notes that it is hard to identify Flinck's work while he is in Rembrandt's workshop—that, in fact, no works are attributed to him with certainty until he has set up on his own.

Collaboration raises questions about the term "authentic." "What did authenticity mean in the seventeenth century?" Wheelock asks. "Are we applying twentieth-century criteria to Rembrandt's work?" One work traditionally attributed to Rembrandt that may illustrate this gray area is "The Vision of Daniel," a wonderful painting in Berlin. It was accepted by von Bode and Bredius but is thought by Gerson and Sumowski to be the work of a pupil. Sumowski once thought that Carel Fabritius may have been the painter, and that there may have been some "retouches" by Rembrandt. "Rembrandt and/or Studio" is how a recent catalogue puts it. Perhaps we need to be able to conceive of a painting as an authentic product of Rembrandt & Company.

For the time being, however, the Rembrandt Research Project does not seem to be sympathetic to this catholic view. Josua Bruyn, moreover, finds little similarity in the operations of Rembrandt and Rubens. He says, "Where Rubens frequently touched up student work, it was rarer for Rembrandt to do this. He may of course have left secondary passages to assistants, but the position of pupils was different in his workshop to what it was in Rubens'. Rembrandt's advanced pupils produced their own work." (Once again, Arthur Wheelock disagrees.)

Another set of questions concerning authenticity arises from a form of collaboration which Rembrandt may never have envisaged: work done on a painting long after it has left his studio. No three-hundred-year-old painting can be said with any conviction to look the way it did when the artist ceased to add paint and varnish to it, with or without assistance. By the nineteenth century, many Rembrandts were famous (or notorious) for their darkness. They were often framed, hung, and lit in such a way that this quality was exaggerated; "The Night Watch"



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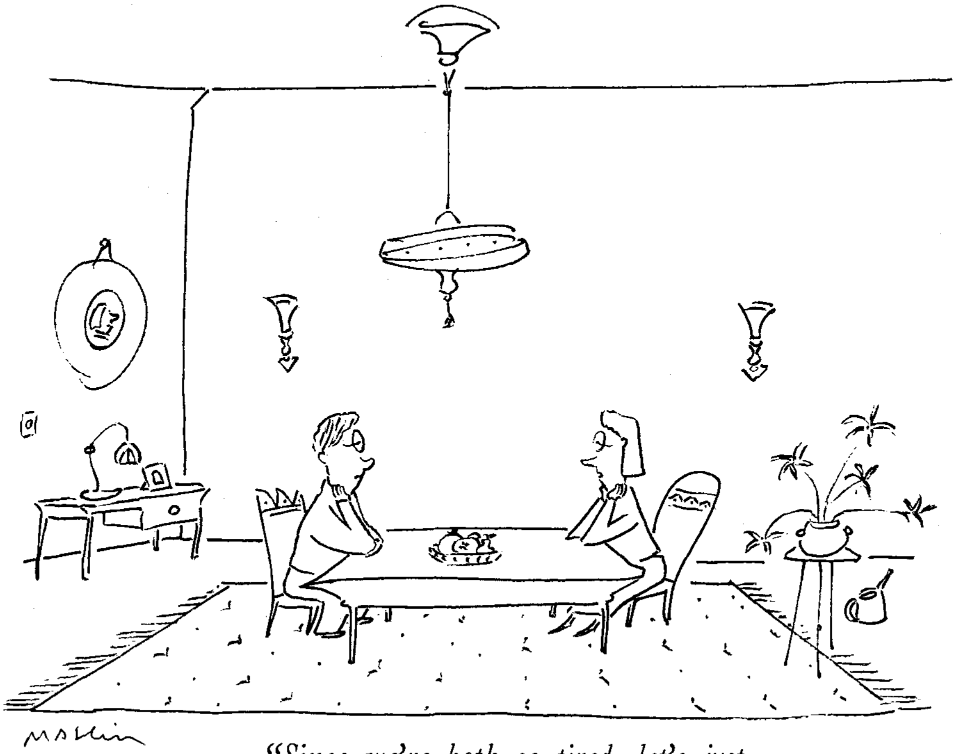


"Since we're both so tired, let's just reheat last night's argument."

• •

was displayed in Amsterdam in a manner that in 1875 Eugène Fromentin, the French critic and painter, thought made it look "still more smoky than it really is." Ruskin couldn't stand Rembrandt, because of his paintings' "diffusion of gloom." But the darkness that time had added to the strong chiaroscuro of many Rembrandt paintings may well have been cleaned away in the last twenty years. What might have seemed an authentic Rembrandt on the strength of its melancholy, blurred, dark-brown patina may need to be judged afresh as a painting with vivid reds and oranges and distinct glazes. A recent cleaning has revealed bright pinks in the "Old Man in Prayer" in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

The restorers who bring about these changes come, like other experts, with a range of skills, talent, and sensitivity. Some believe in holding on as best they can to the status quo; some believe in trying to return the work to its original state. Some Rembrandts have been more "done over" than others—so much that there may be little in the paint one sees on the canvas which was applied by either Rembrandt or his assistants. "The Night Watch" is a case in point. Gary Schwartz says, "There's practically nothing left on the surface of it that is by the Master."

"The Polish Rider" has been cleaned and restored a number of times. It was probably given some sort of treatment in Vienna in 1877, and certainly was during a stay in Berlin in 1898. The Frick catalogue refers to paint losses, abrasions, and old tears. A row of nail holes near the top, now filled with gesso, suggests that the picture was once mounted on a shorter stretcher—"with," according to the catalogue, "several inches of sky at the top of the canvas folded over out of sight." At the bottom, part of the original canvas, with two of the horse's hooves, had been lost and—presumably before the painting reached New York—replaced with a strip of coarser canvas about four inches high. On this, the two restored hooves were painted "awkwardly, so that they were seen in profile rather than slightly foreshortened." The horse looked as if it had a conflicting, and therefore static, gait.

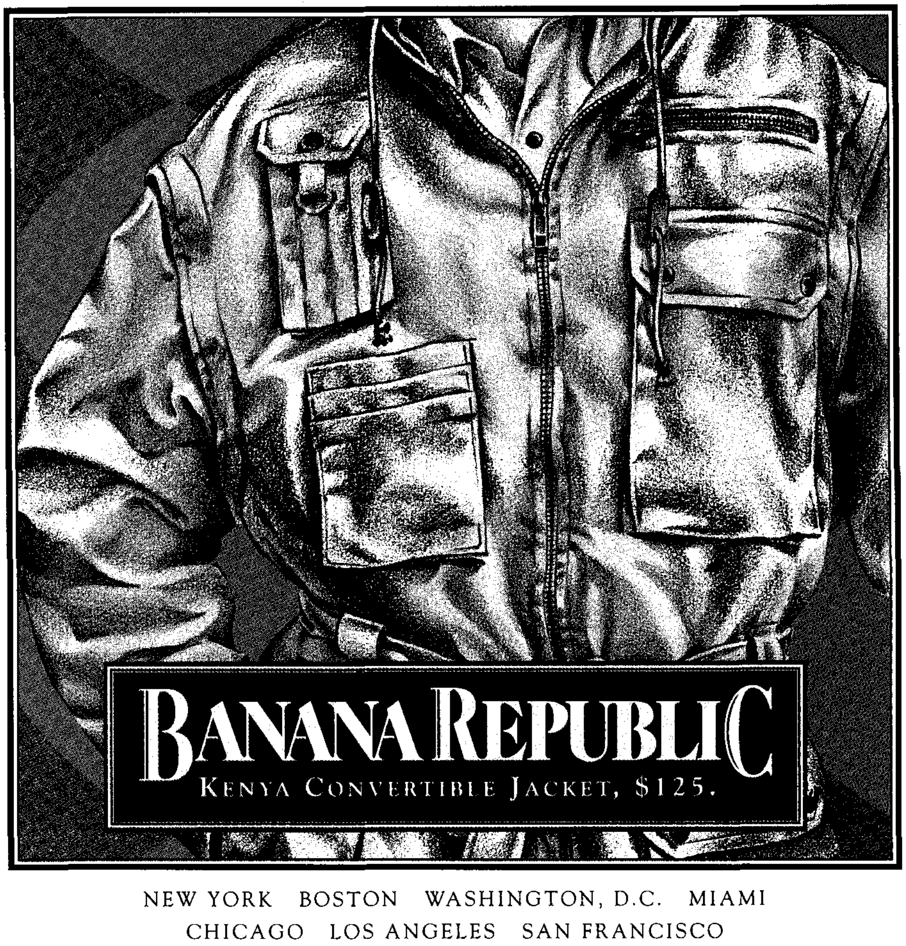
Since "The Polish Rider" has been at the Frick, it has received a good deal of technical attention. In 1935, some missing pieces of its frame were replaced, the corners rejoined, and the gilding touched up. In 1938, before the painting was cleaned it was closely examined by a conservator named George L. Stout. He wrote, "The principal figure and his horse have escaped the amount of loss and of renovation which the rest has suffered"—which implies that Mr. Stout thought the background had been somewhat damaged and restored. During the first half of 1950, the painting was in the hands of William Suhr, an expert restorer, who was at that time the Frick's conservator. It seems likely that since it was painted no one had looked at it so closely. On his first inspection, he was impressed by "the abominable color of the varnish, a deep brown, which makes the painting all but invisible." The painting was X-rayed at that time, and the canvas in the newer bottom strip was seen to have a coarser weave. After Suhr removed all the old varnish, he reported that the danger of damaging the original paint—a danger in every cleaning of a picture—was especially acute here. "The reds of trousers, cap and harness and the ocher in the bit are very sensitive," he wrote. "It is only common sense to recognize that the friction alone involved in cleaning, repeated over and over again, must in time wear down any paint film." One had to face the choice of not seeing the picture at all or of seeing it falsified or of running the risk of continuously "skinning" it by such cleaning. Suhr said that the varnish dissolved easily; the colors could then be seen without the falsification of the dark-brown film of varnish, dating from the last complete restoration and later touch-ups. And now the losses, tears, and nail holes and other blemishes and abrasions could be seen. The ground could be recognized by the fine white grain in the umber-colored layer, but it was hard to determine the extent of any losses, because of what Suhr described as Rembrandt's "skipping brushwork."

Although Suhr was uncertain about the "R" in the rock—whether it was part of a signature or even put there by Rembrandt—he was in no doubt as to who had painted "The Polish Rider": "A characteristic bit of Rembrandt technique is the area just behind and above the fire at the pool. It is an ocher-umber-colored pasty underpaint with a texture like lava flow, glazed with an asphalt-colored tone. . . . Similar areas are to be seen in the [1658] 'Self-Portrait' in the sleeves, the Rijksmuseum 'Betrayal of St. Peter,' and others."

Suhr followed his cleaning with "retouching" and varnishing. What the retouching involved is not spelled out in Suhr's report, but it apparently included a repainting of the two hooves on the newer bottom strip, which vastly improved them from the standpoint of perspective and coördinated the way in which the horse's legs seem to be moving. A legend in the art world has it that, as one museum curator put it, "Billy Suhr did the bottom four inches of 'The Polish Rider.' "

FEWER than a dozen paintings attributed to Rembrandt have related documents that prove he painted them. Among these paintings are the five that he produced for Prince Frederik Hendrick on the theme of Christ's Passion. "The Night Watch" is another painting that has documents dealing with its commissioning and its ownership from then until now. "Just as well," Gary Schwartz says sardonically, "since if judged purely by the methods of the Rembrandt Research Project, it might not make it." Yet contemporary documents have not in the latest analysis saved from de-attribution a painting in the Royal Collection at Windsor. The documents show that this portrait of an old woman, thought to be Rembrandt's mother, was brought from Holland in 1629 by Sir Robert Kerr, given to King Charles I, and entered as a Rembrandt in the catalogue of the Stuart collection in the sixteen-thirties. X-rays have revealed beneath the surface an earlier painted head of an old man, which looks like that of a model used by Lievens and Dou and, according to Gary Schwartz, also resembles that to be seen in a copy made by Constantijn Huygens' son Christiaan of a lost portrait of an old man by Rembrandt. The R.R.P. in Volume I of the "Corpus" weighed the evidence regarding the Windsor "Old Woman" and accepted it as a Rembrandt, although of the early sixteen-thirties. In Volume II, the team has decided that the documents do not count for much and has reattributed the painting to Lievens.

As for "The Polish Rider," no documents have been found before 1791 connecting it and the name of Rembrandt. In this respect, it is like the vast majority of paintings attributed to the Master. Like them, therefore—whatever connoisseurs say so firmly one way or the other, and however strongly one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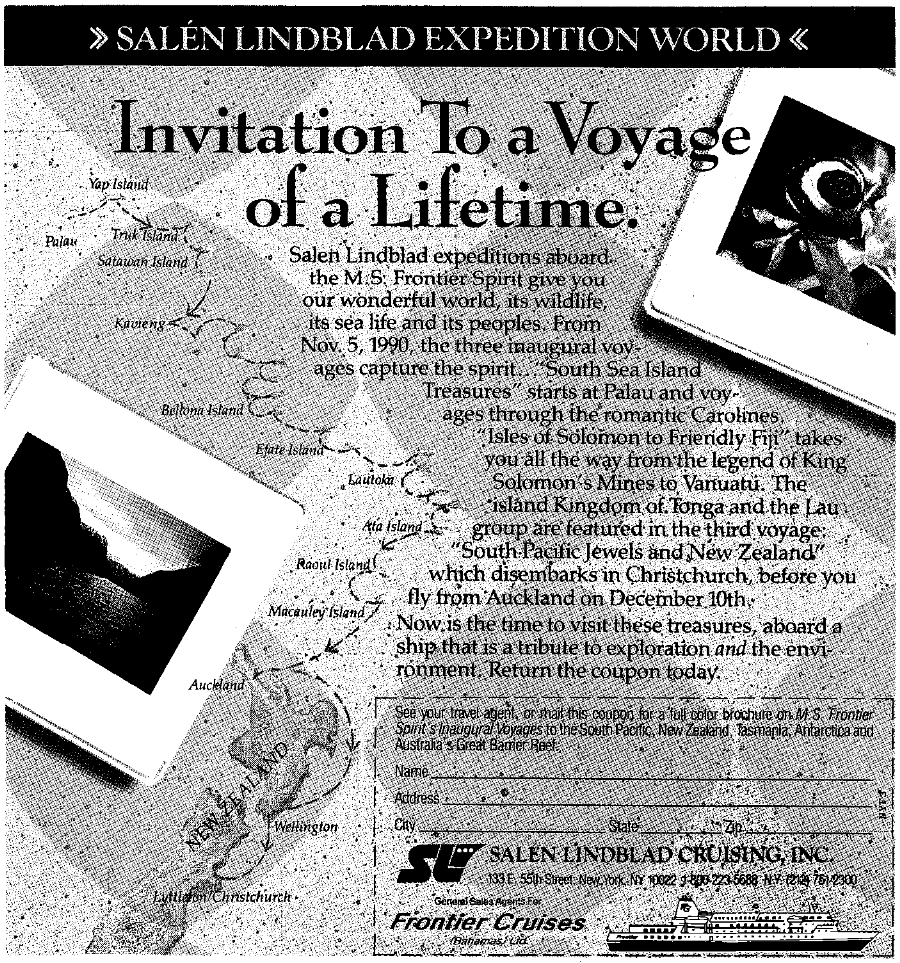
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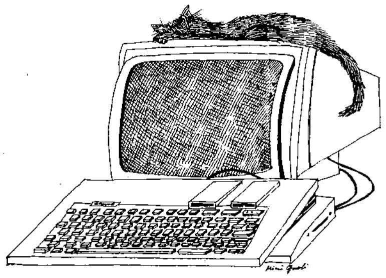
feels—it must remain what Schwartz calls "a disputable case."

THE gatherings to welcome back the Project's pairs of investigators from their field trips are now long in the past, and the weekly lunches were discontinued some time ago. Josua Bruyn says, "As the effort became less common, there was less need for meetings." The pens writing the drafts of the "Corpus" have in recent years been largely in the hands of Josua Bruyn and Ernst van de Wetering, and it is Bruyn's personality that most close observers find stamped on the first two volumes. These demonstrate that he believes in a rigorous, scientifically based approach to connoisseurship and that he tends to be demanding. (A fellow art historian who once walked around a museum with Bruyn remembers that every time they paused before a painting Bruyn found a fault in it.) However, although he has clearly been the team leader, Bruyn insists that decisions about attribution, which he admits can be "delicate," are taken by the entire team. He told a Dutch reporter, "This means that the responsibility lies in the hands of the committee members and does not fall on one individual." (It also means that in dealing with those upset by R.R.P. decisions the team shoulders any blame or abuse.)

As the preface to Volume I of the "Corpus" admits, a different psychological process may be involved when several connoisseurs are making decisions about attributions. Bob Haak, one of the pair who examined "The Polish Rider" in 1969, says, "You are more prepared to take risks when you have a companion. If you are riding a bike alone and you come to a red light, you stop. But when you have a friend riding with you, you may give each other the necessary daring to ride through." Doubt is infectious, and not only spreads from person to person but intensifies as it does so. Ernst van de Wetering says there is danger in pointing out a weak spot in a painting to a colleague, for he will then point one out to you, and you will find another to show to him, and so on. They may ride together through Haak's red light.

Even so, the team qua team has its defenders. Michael Kitson, the director of the Mellon Center in London, who doesn't support all the Project's de-attributions, says, "A team means there is less liability in a member's having an off day—which a connoisseur on his own could have with more serious effects." Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, who also disagrees with some R.R.P. verdicts, believes that the team practices more than mere connoisseurship by majority vote. "Their findings are the result of much debate among collocutors, among individuals who bring different areas of knowledge to the discussion," he told me. "But the discussion requires that those taking part in it have similar responses to visual experiences—say, to the shadows in the eye sockets of Rembrandt portraits. Unless they all observe the same things there, the discussion is meaningless."

The members of the team feel strongly that their method is an improvement over the way connoisseurs have operated in the past. Although they write, modestly, in Volume II of the "Corpus," that their views are not the last word, they are aware that the very existence and physical size of the "Corpus" give the impression of detailed and determined judgment. In regard to the detail, Haak says that there would have been no point in simply following Bredius in picking a lot of paintings as Rembrandts and not saying why one had picked them. In regard to the determination, Bruyn refers to the "Corpus," with a pleased chuckle, as "a book of rather firm decisions." And he is quick to defend his team against the criticism that, despite its claims to comprehensive examination of paintings and use of modern scientific aids, it is ultimately as subjective as previous connoisseurs. He says, "Our decisions are the result of five of us looking very carefully at hundreds of paintings attributed to Rembrandt, and our judgments are therefore at the least intersubjective." Ernst van de Wetering thinks the team practices a profitable form of group connoisseurship, but he doesn't pretend they always arrive at a consensus. Any one member, he says, may never be quite as convinced as the others about a particular decision, and it would be unscholarly to suggest otherwise. In Volume II, van de Wetering expresses a minority opinion about several paintings.



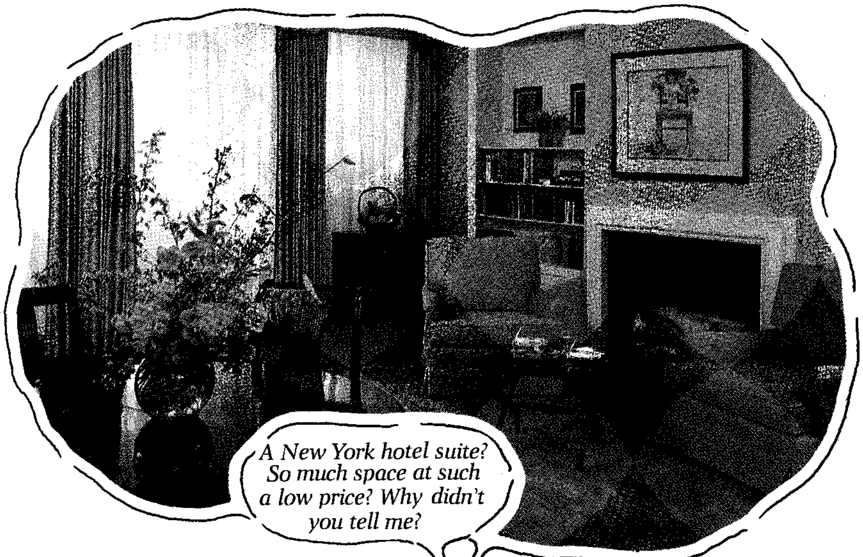
FOR all the argument and passion it produces, the world of Rembrandt scholarship and expertise is not large. It probably contains at any one time forty or fifty people who find in it their principal motivation or some of their livelihood. Of these, perhaps twenty are the essential movers and makers. One would include in this highly committed inner circle the R.R.P. members Josua Bruyn, Bob Haak, and Ernst van de Wetering; the museum officials Arthur Wheelock (in Washington), Christopher Brown (in London), Peter Sutton (in Boston), Christopher White (in Oxford), Peter Schatborn (in Amsterdam), and Ben Broos (in The Hague); and academics Werner Sumowski (in Stuttgart), Michael Kitson (in London), Seymour Slive (at Harvard), Svetlana Alpers (at Berkeley), Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann (at N.Y.U.), and David Freedberg (at Columbia). One would include also a few less prominent but vital scholarly workers, like the Dutch archivists Isabella van Eeghen and S. Dudok van Heel, and the Metropolitan's research fellow Maryan Ainsworth. And one would certainly not leave out Gary Schwartz, though he is employed as a publisher, or Julius Held, though he long ago retired from teaching.

It is a world in which relations on the surface are remarkably cordial; underneath one sometimes glimpses rapier and knuckle-duster. Scholar X in a letter refers warmly to his friends and colleagues in the field of Rembrandt studies. One of those friends, however, says privately that X gets terribly worked up about what Jos and Ernst are doing. Another scholar says, "So-and-So reviewed my last book very nicely, but he's really a dreadful fence sitter." Another, hearing I am on my way to see Y, says, "For God's sake, don't tell him you've talked to me first, or he'll make a point of finding out what I said and then disagreeing with it." Most of those who aren't on the team start conversations on the subject of the R.R.P. with "I admire the members of the Project very much" or "It's a most courageous, painstaking effort" before becoming argumentative. They appear at symposia together and they review each other's books (who else can?), in pieces that often take a year or so to write and appear in *Oud Holland*, *Art in America*, the *London* or *New York Review of Books*, or *The Burlington*. Scholarly camaraderie generally softens the rougher edges of argument. A "very thoughtful new book," Peter Sutton writes of Svetlana Alpers' "Rembrandt's Enterprise." "However, many may be uncomfortable with . . ." Gary Schwartz also feels "deep discomfort" about Alpers' book, about its "extreme claims" and "ignoring of historical facts," before—in his last paragraph—admitting that he may have been "too harsh" and that the book contains some "positive contributions." One has the impression that the Rembrandt scholars usually turn first to the bibliographies and indexes of their colleagues' works, to see what mention they themselves have received in text or footnotes.

Most Rembrandt experts agree that the Rembrandt Research Project deserves praise for diligence. Arthur Wheelock says the team should be given credit for amassing tremendous amounts of information, for helping to dramatize questions of authenticity, and for causing people to look at Rembrandt's work afresh. Gary Schwartz says that Bruyn, Haak, and van de Wetering are all "good people, who have made fine contributions to art history." Most of the team's attributions to date are not the subject of argument. But the rumpus caused by the Project continues to grow.

In the Netherlands, the team has been criticized in the press for not keeping people informed about its findings in the years between publication of "Corpus" volumes. In the first years of the Project, other Dutch art historians may have felt some jealousy, because the R.R.P. seemingly monopolized state subsidies. Yet Bruyn says, "The Project has cost very little in relation to twenty-two years of effort." Now, in fact, other Dutch art historians tend to feel pity rather than envy for the team, seeing it tied to a demanding task that will clearly go on and on.

Outside its homeland, criticism of the R.R.P. coalesces around several issues. (That most of the critics *are* outside the Netherlands may reflect the hackle-raising factor that the team members are all Dutch. Wheelock, for one, thinks that if the Project had more of an international cast it might en-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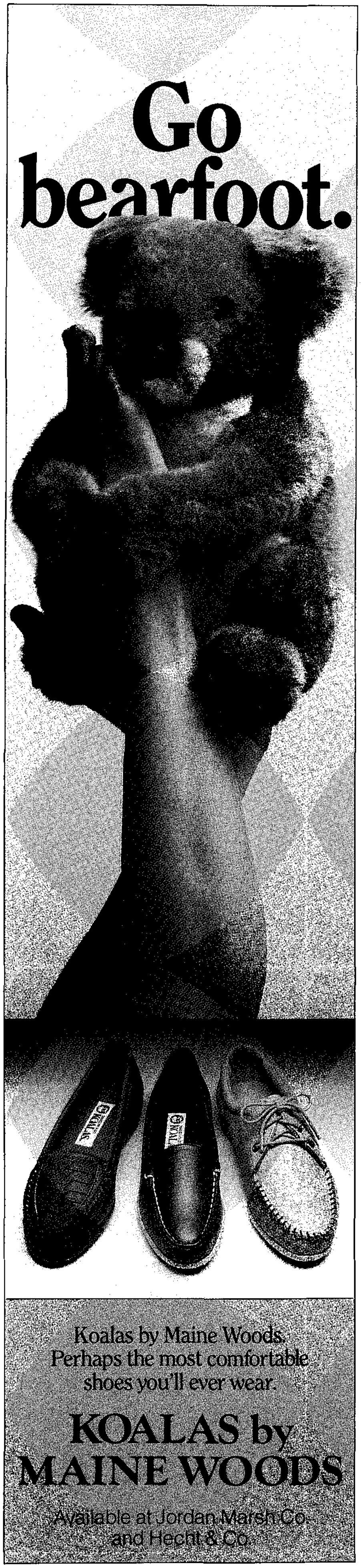

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counter fewer problems.) A number of critics, including museum curators like Wheelock, Sutton, and Brown, whose museums have had works de-attributed by the R.R.P., feel that the "Corpus" categories A and C are too firm, and that there should be more B's—that is, paintings about which a definite verdict cannot be given. Wheelock says that the members of the Project have "as a basis of their pronouncements, a conviction that Rembrandt's genius is clearly distinguishable from the efforts of his contemporaries." That is a conviction that they have not always managed to get others to share; indeed, as Alpers has remarked, "instead of isolating Rembrandt's manner, the team has called attention to its diffusion." Christopher Brown feels strongly that the R.R.P. expects Rembrandt's work to be always perfect. If it isn't, it is credited to pupils or followers. (Or, as Wheelock puts it, "whereas Bode welcomed Rembrandt's stylistic eccentricities as confirmation of his artistic genius, these Dutch art historians tend to see them as justifications for rejection.") Some scholars claim that the members of the team use external evidence such as documents or scientific analyses when it suits them and ignore such evidence when it conflicts with what their eyes tell them. David Freedberg agrees: "The 'Corpus,' for all its merits, has a false aura of objectivity. It reflects the team's supposition that it can reduce everything to a science. But the R.R.P. remains in the end subjective, like previous connoisseurs."

Maryan Ainsworth is critical of the team for not being consistent in the way it has looked at pictures: a painting owned by a private collector may have been examined quite differently from a painting in a museum, where X-rays and paint samples are provided. She and Wheelock both believe that the R.R.P. hasn't been sufficiently open to what Rembrandt's drawings and etchings have to tell us about his paintings, since similar features and parallel techniques are to be seen in all his mediums. Although she makes only modest claims for autoradiography, she says the Project is denying some of the serious evidence that autoradiographs have provided. The network of brushstrokes is often like the network of hatching that Rembrandt made with an etcher's needle, she says, and the energy with which he sketched out the basis of a portrait, or decisively executed serious changes, is to be seen in the autoradiographs of paintings just as it is in Rembrandt drawings—energy that seems to have been part of his thought process. Peter Sutton is disturbed that the Project is now arriving at verdicts based on reports made by their pairs of scouts twenty years ago, and that, although some paintings may have been revisited by individual members of the Project, not all have been looked at again and discussed on location by the same pair who saw them originally, and, in fact, none of the Rembrandts at the Boston M.F.A. have been reëxamined at all.

The very basis of the Project is attacked by Gary Schwartz. He is in a unique position, being an insider and an outsider, who, after studying art history at N.Y.U. and Johns Hopkins, went to the Netherlands to do research, in 1965. A publisher of art books and, for many years, of the art-history journal *Simiolus*, Schwartz is married to a Dutch art historian and lives in a patrician seventeen-twenties house at the edge of the Vecht River in the village of Maarssen, half an hour from Amsterdam. He is a tall man with a fine beard, and has a serious but friendly manner. In his first years in Holland, he did much translating and editing for art scholars, including the Rembrandt expert Horst Gerson. Schwartz says that Gerson, a traditional connoisseur but also something of an iconoclast, felt that the team approach to remaking Rembrandt's oeuvre was not a sound one, and "he tried to talk them out of it." Schwartz has put his own interest in Rembrandt on display in his 1984 book on the artist. With help from archivists, he has looked into hundreds of obscure contacts and connections of Rembrandt's. He says he has attempted to avoid "the art historian's sin of trying to interpret my artist's character on the basis of his work." At the end of his book, Schwartz plumps with surprising eagerness for a view of Rembrandt as "an untrustworthy character" with "a nasty disposition"—a view that the evidence gathered in his own book doesn't seem to substantiate.

Schwartz, in any event, is an art historian who is unusually interested in the sociology and psychology of the profession. He sees the members of the Rembrandt Research Project as individuals subject to the constraints of belonging to a self-selected, somewhat insulated group and to the hierarchy of Dutch art-historical research. In Schwartz' opinion, the members of the R.R.P. are "in over their heads, intellectually, methodologically." He views their work as beginning in a sort of generational reflex: "They were angry young men needing to push away from the judgments of the previous generation of scholars." (He admits to similar impulses.) Because the team is trying too hard to arrive at a consistent body of work for Rembrandt, he says, its "Corpus" comes across as authoritarian, *categorical*, when in fact it may not be possible, after three and a half centuries, to take so firm a stand on the question of authorship of paintings that have often been considerably damaged, restored, or copied. Schwartz says, "The authority behind the 'Corpus' dares the reader to attack it. I resent having it assumed that I expect simple yes-and-no answers to questions that may be unanswerable on present evidence."

Many experts, however, are less reluctant to pick up this gauntlet, and a specific area in which opposition to the Project has become manifest is that of paintings that the "Corpus" has relegated to its C category. Although a good number of these unaccepted works arouse no dissent—many are judged by most contemporary experts to have no place in the canon—a sufficient number are controversial enough to call into question the accuracy of the Project's decisions. Among others, the so-called Beresteyn pendants in the Metropolitan Museum particularly illuminate the arguments on both sides. These pictures, which once belonged to the Beresteyn family, in Holland, and were given to the museum by Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, had hitherto almost invariably been credited to Rembrandt's early Amsterdam period. Some scholars, looking at the Beresteyn pair—a middle-aged couple, whose names are not known, wearing elegant dark clothes with lace collars and ruffs—have seen differences in the quality of the two portraits. Two experts—Horst Gerson and H. von Sonnenburg—have accepted the man as the work of Rembrandt and attributed the woman to his workshop. The R.R.P. has rejected both. It says that their quality is below the level one expects of Rembrandt. The man's cloak hangs unnaturally, his flesh lacks plasticity, and his eyebrows are uncharacteristically "coquettish." (To me, they look anxious.) As for the woman, the team regards one of her arms as awkwardly foreshortened. Moreover, the brushstrokes are broader than any the team finds in other Rembrandts of this period. Ernst van de Wetering appears to be moving toward the conclusion that the pair are by Rembrandt's pupil Isaac de Jouderville.

David Freedberg sees the Beresteyn de-attributions as an example of the way the team, despite its declared aims, turns to old-fashioned connoisseurship, and fails to come to terms with convincing up-to-date scientific evidence. The Metropolitan's own investigation of the Beresteyn pair, conducted by Maryan Ainsworth, John Brealey, Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, and Pieter Meyers, used autoradiography and concluded that "close examination

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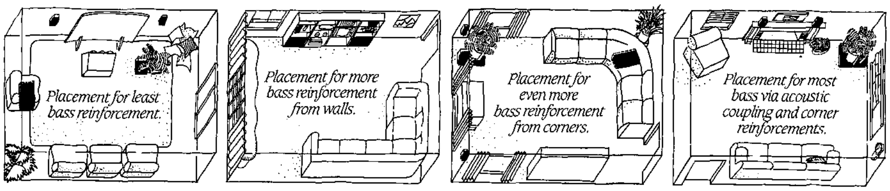
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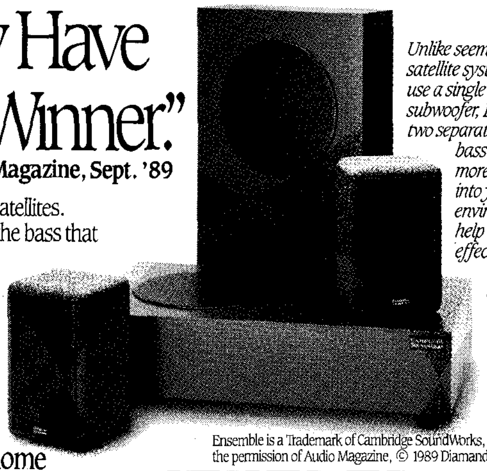
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of the brushwork and working procedure of these paintings reveals Rembrandt's characteristic technique in both." Both portraits show "a consistently linear approach," they write. "In the autoradiographs, this approach is found not only in the distinct undulating contours of costume, but even in the features of the face, which were outlined with vermilion strokes." John Brealey, the head of conservation at the Metropolitan, whose father was a portrait painter, suggested to *ARTnews* two years ago that the reason Rembrandt did a less satisfactory job with the Beresteyn woman was simple: "She was a dreadfully boring woman, and you can see it looking at her face. It was one of those commissions that portrait painters have to do to earn money."

A central issue in the case of the disputed C paintings is clearly the consistent high standard expected of Rembrandt by the R.R.P. A term frequently employed in the argument about this is "Monday mornings": Did Rembrandt have them? As Bob Haak puts it, "it is not just a question of how well he could paint but how badly." A number of experts are sure that Rembrandt was capable of extremely varied work. Christopher Brown says that Rembrandt made mistakes, did hurried and clumsy work, and left paintings unfinished. He was sometimes under a great deal of pressure to churn out commissioned work. Haak himself some years ago conceded that there were less than perfect Rembrandts. Concerning a dubious version of "Abraham's Sacrifice" in Munich, he wrote in his 1968 book on Rembrandt that he believed it to be by Rembrandt despite weak passages in the composition, because such weaknesses also occur in certain other large-scale works by Rembrandt. When I put it to Ernst van de Wetering that some of the R.R.P.'s critics thought its approach was narrow and Calvinistic, and that the "Corpus" seemed to refuse to allow Rembrandt an ability to err, he demurred. I then asked him for an example of a Rembrandt Monday morning and, after a pause for thought, he proposed the "Bellona" in the Metropolitan, a painting that "just didn't work out." But in contrast to van de Wetering, who was taking an entire painting as a mistake or failure, the critics of the R.R.P. are able to allow Rembrandt mistakes in paintings that are not necessarily failures, and may even be masterpieces.

In fact, as Arthur Wheelock has noted of one Rembrandt, "some clumsinesses may make it authentic rather than not authentic." Quite often, Rembrandt seems to lose interest when it comes to painting hands. For David Bomford, the restorer at the National Gallery in London, the horse in the Frederik Rihel equestrian portrait undoubtedly reflects Rembrandt's technique—the paint layers are built up in the same way as on the rest of the canvas—but Rembrandt was having an off moment, or wasn't trying very hard. Peter Sutton declares, "Quality is not an argument for authenticity. A painter of such invention and originality as Rembrandt would not have painted lace in the same way each time." Rembrandt's lifelong interest in experimentation, which could result in variations and inconsistencies, is emphasized by Christopher White, the director of the Ashmolean Museum, in Oxford. He sees this inconsistency demonstrated in Rembrandt's drawings and etchings—bodies of Rembrandt's work which critics of the R.R.P. believe the Project in the past hasn't taken sufficiently into account. (An effort to purify the œuvre of Rembrandt drawings is being separately carried out by Peter Schatborn, at the Rijksmuseum.) An English sculptor, Nigel Konstam, who is a student of Rembrandt's drawings, has written to Bruyn and van de Wetering, "I find Rembrandt hugely more variable than your team will allow. I can give very many instances where the quality of the work on a single sheet, all clearly by Rembrandt himself, varies from exquisite to poor, by any standards. In spite of this fluctuating quality, I find my Rembrandt not only is a far more prolific artist but is more interesting and has far more to teach us, perhaps because he is more human (and, incidentally, closer to the artist revealed by the documents)."

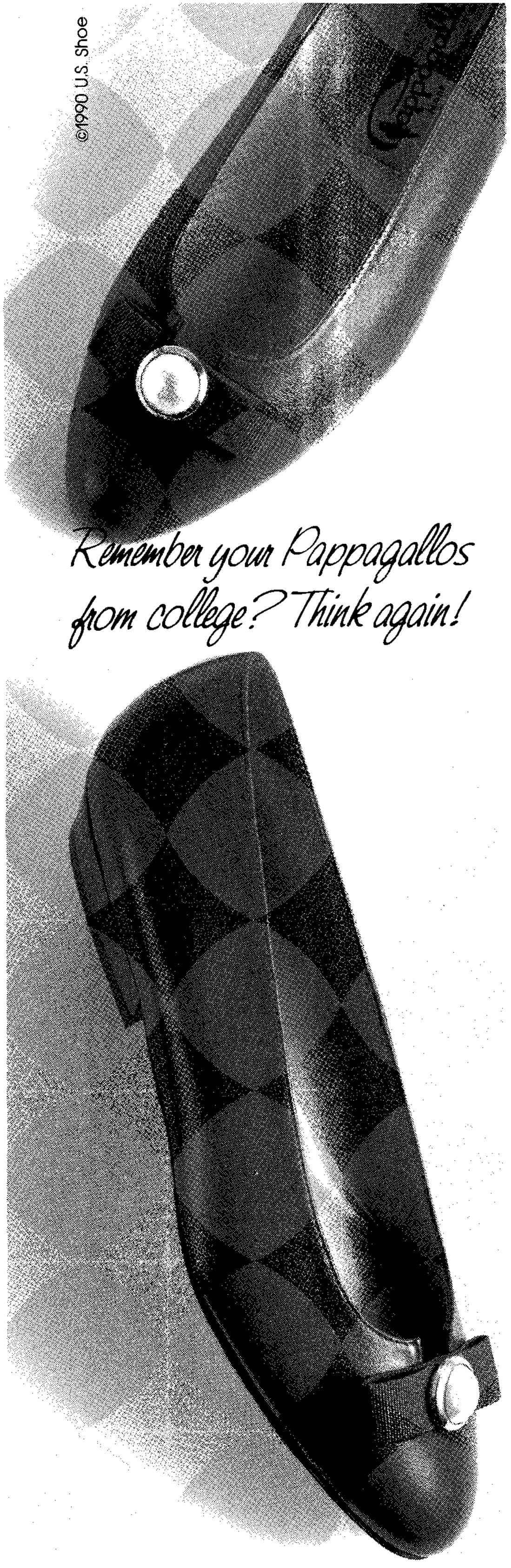
For all the scientific analysis and all the close study of brushstrokes, it is extremely difficult to pin down exactly how Rembrandt laid paint on canvas and panel. While in New York several years ago, Ernst van de Wetering painted a portrait of Maryan Ainsworth, using the same materials as Rembrandt, grinding his own pigments, and trying to emulate Rembrandt's style. Maryan Ainsworth (who has long curly brown hair and striking blue eyes) was not impressed by any Rembrandtesque quality in the result, and neither was the painter. She says, "Handling and energy are elements that count for as much as materials and technique, and Rembrandt's handling and attack don't seem to be things one can copy."

THE sense of loss felt when a Rembrandt is rejected can be immense. In the case of "The Polish Rider," even the possibility of de-attribution produces something of the effect of an impending death: part of our world, of what we know and care about, is on the point of being cut away. If such feelings are common among ordinary viewers, the sensations of the owners of a rejected picture are more acutely painful—and are certainly not ameliorated by an immediate reduction in the monetary value of the picture, which is an unavoidable effect of the rejection.

The team members now realize that their method of approach may have increased the hurt feelings. Josua Bruyn admits that the R.R.P. failed to warn owners of the possible implications of de-attribution. "Indeed, we did not say when we first got in touch that we wanted to know if their Rembrandt were genuine or not. Rather, we said that we were compiling an œuvre catalogue and wanted to study their Rembrandt for that purpose. This led to controversy sometimes when the painting proved not to be authentic." Moreover, the way in which the news of rejection was conveyed to owners of paintings dealt with in Volume I of the "Corpus" was not very tactful. Some owners were upset that they received no advance notice that they were going to have to do without the tremendous satisfaction of owning a Rembrandt. One private collector is said to have first learned from a newspaper that his Rembrandt was in the C category, and was furious. An American collector refused to allow a reproduction of his "Rest on the Flight Into Egypt" to be published in the first volume of the "Corpus" after learning that it was going to be de-attributed. He had bought the painting not long before from an English owner, in whose collection a pair of investigators from the R.R.P. first studied it. (The new owner did eventually adjust to the situation and to the R.R.P.'s attribution of his painting to Gerard Dou and Govert Flinck, and he allowed photographs of it to appear in an appendix to Volume II.)

The R.R.P. now makes a point of letting the owner—and only the owner—know its verdict before a volume of the "Corpus" is published; a crafty owner could therefore sell his picture before it was publicly de-attributed. But before the auction, in January, 1988, of the painting called "A Bearded Man Standing in an Archway" Sotheby's asked the owner to allow the R.R.P. to give its opinion in public—since the appropriate volume of the "Corpus" was still in the future. Bruyn's verdict, bravely published in the auction catalogue, was that the painting was "from Rembrandt's workshop but was not executed by the artist himself." Both Christopher Brown and Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann believe that the painting is by the Master, and Arthur Wheelock says, "There are good reasons for thinking portions of it at least are by Rembrandt." The impact of the R.R.P. judgment, however, was such that the painting was sold for eight hundred thousand dollars instead of the ten million dollars it might have gone for as an undisputed Rembrandt.

For museums and large state and public collections, the demotion of their prized possessions might be thought to involve less emotional reactions, but David Freedberg thinks that curators can respond like private collectors, and may even feel greater terror at the prospect of de-attribution by the Project. Rumors circulate through the museum world about where the team may strike next. Freedberg says, "I hear, for example, that the 'Lucretia' in the Washington National Gallery is now doubted by them." So far, the R.R.P. has rejected Rembrandts in the Louvre, the Hermitage, the Metropolitan, Windsor Castle, the Mauritshuis, the National Galleries in Washington, London, Ottawa, and Stockholm, and important museums in such other cities as Berlin, Kassel, and Boston. Some museums are better able than others to handle rejections. The Dutch art historian Albert Blankert has noted that at the Wadsworth Atheneum, in Hartford, Connecticut, an "attractive" painting called "Portrait of a Young Man" was moved from a place of honor to the basement on losing its Rembrandt attribution. The



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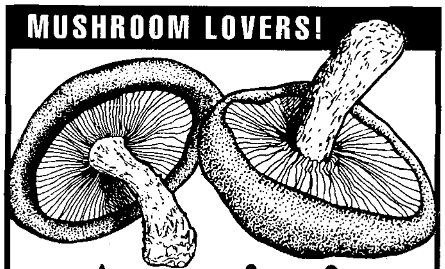

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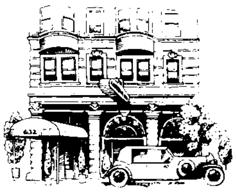

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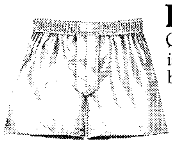

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Gemäldegalerie, in Berlin, having independently decided against "The Man with the Golden Helmet," made the painting the centerpiece of an exhibition with accompanying X-rays, blowups of paint samples, and photographs of works by Rembrandt pupils. Gary Schwartz says, "Experts or insiders have their own ways of dealing with the problems of de-attribution, like stockbrokers who tell you with a straight face that the market discounted six months ago figures that you just heard on the radio." Arthur Wheelock believes that large museums can generally stand their ground: they have their own scholars, their own research programs. His institution, the National Gallery in Washington, is already reassessing its Rembrandts in the course of conservation work, and makes use of R.R.P. findings without feeling threatened by them.

In some instances, the controversy over a reassessment may be so great, and argument so widespread, that there is less pressure for a museum to accept the new attribution. Even if it should be accepted, such a change would probably not be made manifest very quickly in most museums, which don't usually have a staff member detailed to run round altering labels. The Metropolitan in New York has in fact de-attributed several of its Rembrandts, mostly on the basis of autoradiographic evidence, but the labels on the frames or the adjacent walls still say "Rembrandt." So do the labels next to the Beresteyn couple, even though at one point in 1986 Metropolitan officials appeared to be in full retreat before the R.R.P. de-attribution: both Philippe de Montebello, the museum's director, and Walter Liedtke, the curator of Dutch and Flemish paintings, seemed to have been convinced that the Beresteyn pair were assistant work from Rembrandt's studio, although Montebello continued to believe that the Master had been standing alongside the pupil. However, after the paintings had been shown and discussed at an international symposium in Boston in early 1987, attended by members of the R.R.P. team, at which the participants divided more or less neatly—the Dutch against the Rembrandt authorship of the Beresteyns, the Americans and the English for it—the Metropolitan directorate changed its mind again and stiffened its stance. As far as the museum is concerned—and, after all, it has its autoradiographs for convincing evidence—the Beresteyns are still Rembrandts.

WHAT are the arguments used by the Project's members when they are asked to put their case against Rembrandt's authorship of "The Polish Rider"? Bob Haak says, "All over, the painting is a little too weak. It is not at all balanced. I don't see Rembrandt's brushstrokes. There's the expression of the face, the impossible leg, the very strange horse. And then the whole background— Well, it could be unfinished, but some tiny details in it led us to conclude that it was finished or nearly so, and in that case the painting is not by Rembrandt." Josua Bruyn says, "Pictorially, 'The Polish Rider' seems to me to spring from a different temperament than the 1658 'Self-Portrait.' The modelling of the figure, the feeling of the landscape—it is all much softer. A more feminine temperament is at work." Ernst van de Wetering says, "In Rembrandt, things always have a certain weight, a certain bodyness or stability. Here, with 'The Polish Rider,' everything is too slim. The entire painting is shaky. The proportions of the figure are strange. There is a lack of relationship between the figure and the background—and I am convinced Rembrandt always got his backgrounds right first of all. There is a great deal of detail which isn't incorporated in the whole scheme. And the lighting is curious—it breaks up the unity of the painting. All this makes me doubt the picture, makes me wonder if another mentality was behind it."

That mentality and more "feminine" temperament was given a name in Bruyn's book review in *Oud Holland* in 1984—a review that the team's chairman may also have intended to prepare the Frick for a shock about "The Polish Rider." In conversation Bruyn himself recognizes it as one of those extraordinary pictures which attract devotion. "It is a case where we have to tread carefully," he told me not long ago. Bruyn has not committed his colleagues; he says, "My own personal doubts have been expressed." The expression took the somewhat roundabout form of Bruyn's proposing that when examining the possible work of Rembrandt pupils, and, in particular, that of Willem Drost, "to clear the terrain, one must not forget a number of paintings which until now are considered Rembrandts—'The Seated Man with a Cane' in London (National Gallery), or the so-called 'Polish Rider' in the Frick Collection, which at the least shows remarkable similarities with Drost's early, Rembrandtesque work." I doubt if it does Bruyn an injustice to suspect that he must have felt relief, perhaps even wry pleasure, at finally getting this off his chest. He had been living since 1969 with his conviction that "The Polish Rider" was not by Rembrandt, and in more recent years with the belief that Drost was probably its painter. According to Gary Schwartz, rumors that "The Polish Rider" was going to be on the Project's hit list had circulated in Dutch art-historical circles nearly fifteen years before that issue of *Oud Holland* appeared. Apart from a possible wish to prepare people for a surprise, Bruyn may well have felt a strong need to throw a bone to those clamoring for a public statement—perhaps all the stronger because the relevant volume of the "Corpus" was, and is, still a long way off.

In any event, any element of caution in Bruyn's expression of doubt was ignored by a number of commentators. Sylvia Hochfield wrote, in *ARTnews*, of Rembrandt's being "stripped of some beloved works, such as . . . 'The Polish Rider.' " Svetlana Alpers' recent book seems to regard the de-attribution of "The Polish Rider" as a fait accompli, for beneath an illustration of it the artist's name is printed in quotation marks, as "Rembrandt"—the quotation marks denoting the now R.R.P.-authorized doubt. In an article called "The Faker's Art," in the *New York Review of Books*, Joseph Alsop suggested that for the R.R.P. the authenticity of "The Polish Rider" was of no consequence. The suggestion led Bruyn to write to the *N.Y.R.B.* protesting that "the Rembrandt Research Project . . . has *not* 'sat in judgment' on the 'Polish Rider' "—as Alsop had written—"nor 'decided to remove it from the sacred list of authentic Rembrandts' . . . leave alone 'by a vote of three to two'!" No member of the R.R.P. thought of the painting as a fake, Bruyn concluded, "and there should have been no place for it in an article on 'the faker's art.' "

The matter of fakery might not be at issue here—although Alsop may not

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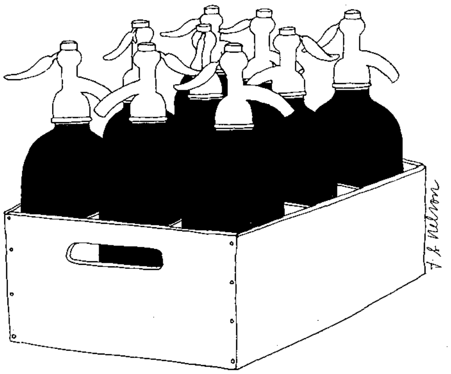
have been as ill-informed as Bruyn thinks when he placed the R.R.P.'s views and "The Polish Rider" in that context. Professor Alpers has pointed out that in Volume I of the "Corpus" a member of the team complained, in regard to some rejected paintings, "In a number of cases it is all but impossible to decide whether the Rembrandtesque aspect is due to a deliberate, or even fraudulent, intention or to Rembrandt's direct influence on a pupil or follower." And while it is true, as Bruyn protests, that the R.R.P. has not yet formally reached a verdict on "The Polish Rider" Alsop's perception of how the team might vote does not seem wildly inaccurate. Of the three crucial team members who might make up a majority for the rejection of the painting, Bruyn told me in Amsterdam not long ago that "The Polish Rider" in his opinion was definitely a C; Haak said that he agreed that the painting was not by the Master; and van de Wetering, while he was a little more hesitant about committing himself to anything that sounded like a final judgment, was happy to talk about the many features of the picture which would cause one to reject it.

The Frick has made no public announcements on the subject. Despite a healthy fifteen-million-dollar endowment from its founder, which enables the Frick to continue to buy works of art (more than a third of its paintings have been bought since Frick's death), the Frick does not have the resources of a large museum. It has no expert on Dutch art or scientific investigator on its staff. It brings in conservators and has never contemplated autoradiography.

Yet, despite the outward calm and customary serenity of the Frick, one soon learns that several of its senior officers are infuriated by the Rembrandt Research Project. The Frick's director is Charles Ryskamp, a specialist in eighteenth-century art and literature, who came from the Morgan Library in 1987, and who has a stout, pink-gray eighteenth-century look about him. (Sir Joshua Reynolds would be the artist for *his* portrait.) After two and a half years in his post, Mr. Ryskamp is not shy about the Frick. He says, proudly, "If there were a poll on the subject, I'm sure the Frick would be chosen as the world's favorite museum. Have you read Peter Sutton's book 'Dutch Art in America'? He writes, 'Painting for painting, the Frick Collection is quite simply the greatest in the world.' Of these paintings, there are two or three that continue to provoke most public reaction—'The Polish Rider' is one. Before I came here, I heard of Professor Bruyn's theory and I thought, So what? Now I still couldn't care less what the Rembrandt Research Project says. Connoisseurship has an ugly name these days, and a good deal of the labor of art historians does nothing to increase our joy. I don't think the Project's opinions detract from one of the greatest paintings on earth. It is unthinkable that it isn't by Rembrandt. To prove that it is not by him, someone is going to have to assemble a body of work for an artist capable of that kind of masterpiece. To me, the problem of Rembrandt is similar to that presented by Shakespeare. Some people just can't accept his genius. They want to chip away at the hugeness of it. They come up with other authors for the plays—noblemen preferred, of course. Shakespeare's father was a smallholder. Rembrandt's father was a miller. I think the Project is a Dutch attempt to make Rembrandt tidy, safe, and rational. It is an attempt that is concerned with only a few qualities of the paintings, and does not take in other qualities, which create responses in the hearts of people all over the world who look at the pictures. Anyway, even if the Dutchmen say that 'The Polish Rider' is by Jan Smit, it is not going to come out of that room. Surely the severest test is how it stands up in there, surrounded by fine pictures, and with the 1658 'Self-Portrait' for company."

Despite its director's passionate dismissal of the Project, the Frick Collection in late 1987 invited Ernst van de Wetering to give a talk about "The Polish Rider" and the Project—showing, perhaps, that the Frick could handle this sort of problem with confidence and unruffled courtesy, and perhaps, too, giving the enemy a chance to expose its position. Van de Wetering accepted. He called his talk "Rediscovering Rembrandt," and spoke without a text. Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann, who was in the audience in the Frick's little auditorium, says of van de Wetering's talk, "I thought it was a courageous act, like Daniel going into the lion's den." Edgar Munhall, the Frick's curator, says, "Van de Wetering talked most of the time about the problems of Rembrandt attribution in general, and only a little about 'The Polish Rider.' It was a most unconvincing performance."



In his Frick talk van de Wetering was careful to explain that he had *not* said, "The painting is not by Rembrandt." He now emphasizes that there is "nothing firm yet" about the R.R.P. decision on "The Polish Rider," and says that Bruyn's *Oud Holland* comments have been exaggerated. "In any event," he adds, "these early, premature opinions aren't worth very much." Yet he is aware that these opinions and the team's doubts have undermined the confidence with which some scholars—even those who continue to have other disagreements with the R.R.P.—view "The Polish Rider." Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann says, "I see weaknesses now that I didn't see before. I'm afraid 'The Polish Rider' will probably sink." Although Gary Schwartz had been resisting the de-attribution, he admitted in his book that doubts brought on by the R.R.P. had forced him to look at the painting more critically, and went on to say, "One then discovers that features of the painting which were always considered marks of its greatness as long as it was a Rembrandt—a certain vagueness, a poetic suggestiveness, an ambiguity of meaning—turn into signs of inferior artistry when they are attributed to Drost." David Freedberg says, "I've looked at it more closely because of the R.R.P. I suppose I'm now inclining slightly against it. Yet it is a great picture. It continues to move me more than any other Rembrandt in New York except the 'Self-Portrait' on the same wall. The team will have to be pretty skillful to prove it's by a certain pupil."

"If it is by a pupil, then it is his masterpiece" is a comment often made by dissenting experts about some of the more contentious R.R.P. de-attributions, including "The Polish Rider." John Brealey is one of many who think that "The Polish Rider" is a great painting, "one of the masterpieces of painting in America," and he adds, "If it is not by Rembrandt, then we are in the ridiculous position of launching a quest for a missing and hitherto unrecognized titan."

For Josua Bruyn, the quest may be over, the pupil found, in the form of Willem Drost; he is, apart from Aert de Gelder, A. von Wurzbach's nomination, the only pupil or follower so far put forward by name for authorship of the painting. In coming up with a specific name, Bruyn heeds the admonition the Project offers in Volume II of the "Corpus," namely, to take "seriously the principle . . . that no painting should be rejected unless a new attribution is possible." And he gives credit to two men for helping create this possibility: Ernst van de Wetering, whose study of Rembrandt's workshop forms Chapter 3 of Volume II, and Werner Sumowski, the first volume of whose heavily illustrated catalogue of the Rembrandt school occasioned Bruyn's *Oud Holland* piece. Bruyn believes that Sumowski has "come up with a fairly convincing personality for Drost," based on eight paintings (seven of which are signed "W. Drost") that apparently constitute the bulk of Drost's known oeuvre. In these paintings Bruyn—following Sumowski—sees Drost as an artist whose pictures often contain soft, rounded masses of drapery and figures isolated by a strong sidelight that seems to attach itself to the surfaces. He used strong brushstrokes and favored the colors yellow and white, brown and red. Bruyn's theory is given partial support by van de Wetering, who says, picking his words carefully, "Some of the properties I see in 'The Polish Rider' I see in Drost's work." Yet Bruyn himself now and then seems to acknowledge that he may be too far out on a limb. He told me, "This is a suggestion—not a fixed opinion. Before being absolutely sure, we have to go into Rembrandt's own work for the sixteen-fifties and also carefully examine Drost's work, including his etchings and drawings." (There are several signed etchings by Drost but no signed drawings.) Bruyn, as it happens, is one of the few experts who do not consider "The Polish Rider" a masterpiece. Although he calls it a great picture, he says that if it

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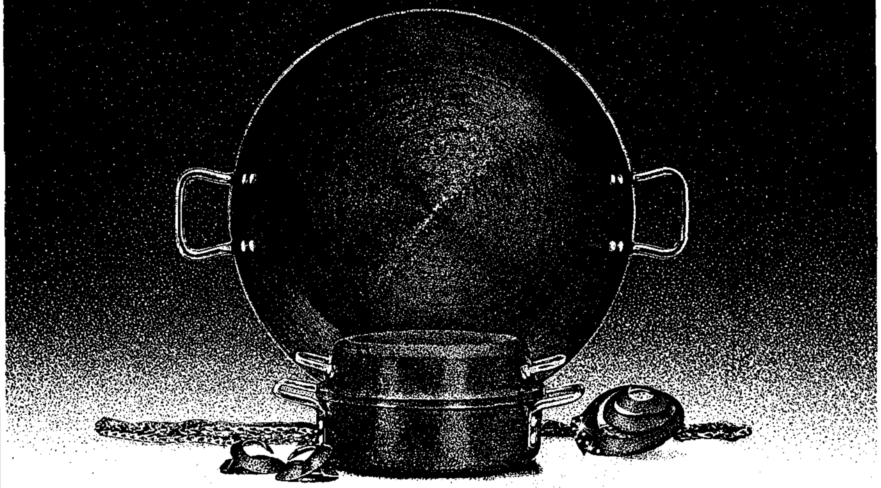

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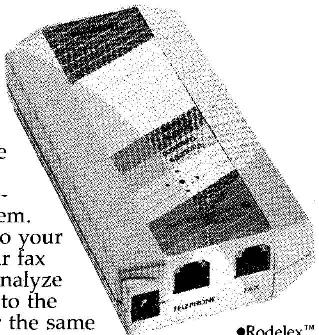

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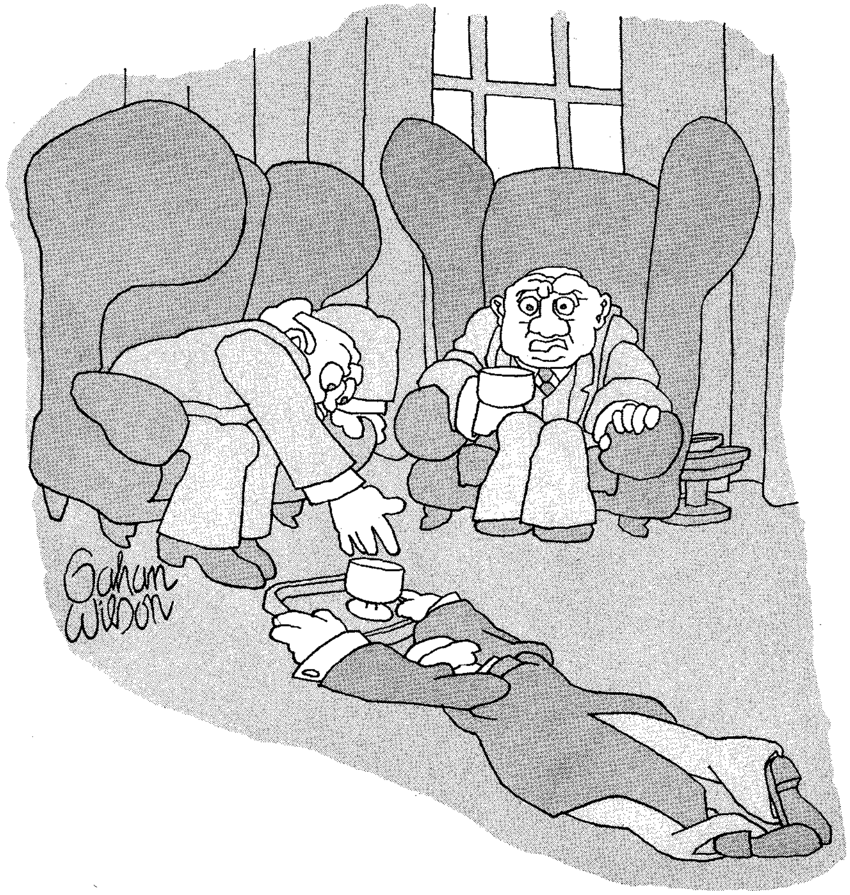

"He'll be damned difficult to replace!"

• •

is by Drost it is not a masterpiece, because Drost composed it in a style that was less than original, being partly derived from Rembrandt.

It might help if we knew more about Willem Drost. But neither the date of his birth nor the date of his death is recorded. The first record of his name yet found in Holland is in Houbraken, where one Drost is mentioned as a pupil of Rembrandt and as an artist who spent considerable time in Rome. A document recently uncovered in Florence describes a painting in the Uffizi, done in about 1655, as a self-portrait by Drost. (The painting has been previously attributed to other artists, and certainly shows the influence of another Rembrandt pupil, Carel Fabritius.) But there seem to be no other references to Drost, and the lack of evidence may, indeed, contribute to an unfairness, in failing to assign to Drost pictures that belong to him. Unsigned works of art can gravitate (or be pushed by dealers) toward powerful identities; minor artists may lose out. Even so, little in Drost's small currently known body of work would lead one to believe that he could paint unaided a picture that reverberates with such mysteries and complications as "The Polish Rider." His work shows Rembrandt's influence and displays a similar interest in Biblical figures, but his pictures have nothing profound about them. The subjects are self-evident. Drost's paintings seem to favor the smooth, fine style that a fashion for the classical began to encourage in the Netherlands in the second half of the seventeenth century (and which commanded higher prices), rather than the rougher, less finished late manner of the Master. The view of most critics of the R.R.P. on this matter is probably put by Arthur Wheelock when he says, "The Drost we know hadn't the creative power to paint 'The Polish Rider.' " Werner Sumowski, it should perhaps be noted, does not mention "The Polish Rider" in his Rembrandt-school volumes in relation to Willem Drost.

The "shakiness" discerned in "The Polish Rider" by the Rembrandt Research Project is also seen by viewers who believe the painting to have been done by Rembrandt. Walter Sickert, in 1910, thought that the face of the rider was lacking in "plastic observation . . . a spiritual rather than a plastic portrait of a face." And Sickert also saw other imperfections: "No Rembrandt is quite Rembrandt without, somewhere, an unexpected bit of drawing that is a little stumpy, and squarer than one expects. . . . I see this trait in the knee of 'The Polish Rider'—just enough to be, not a flaw, but an added emphasis on the signature."

A weakness in "The Polish Rider" which the Project fastens on is the background. Some members of the team regard it as un-Rembrandt-like, because of its unfinished appearance; associated with this criticism is a perception of a break or disjunction between the background and the horse and rider in the foreground. But, as we have seen, George Stout, when he was working on the picture for the Frick in 1938, decided that the background had been damaged and restored. Although Rembrandt, like almost all seventeenth-century Dutch artists, generally worked from back to front, painting the background first, he did not always do so, and he did not always finish his backgrounds. Maryan Ainsworth points to the portrait of Hendrickje Stoffels, in the Metropolitan, where Rembrandt's attention was clearly on the sitter's face rather than on other parts of the picture. She writes, "Perhaps he abandoned the rest," and she adds, "The question of paintings left unfinished by Rembrandt has not been thoroughly studied." For Christopher Brown, the R.R.P. notion of a break between background and foreground is exasperating. "I've heard them say it about other pictures which are clearly by Rembrandt, and I think it's silly," he told me. Brown also believes that Rembrandt may simply not have completed the painting. He, too, has a close-at-hand example of Rembrandt's readiness to leave a painting unfinished; it is another presumably uncommissioned work, the London National Gallery's "Portrait of Hendrickje Stoffels" of 1659. One more work of that period, the "Portrait of Jan Six," of 1654, is painted in broad brushstrokes, and a large element of it, Six's red cloak, hung from one shoulder and dominating the right-hand side of the picture, is remarkably sketchy; still, its unfinished quality does not seem to have worried Jan Six, who commissioned it, and in whose family house it hangs today. Finally, whether finished or unfinished, Rembrandt's later paintings struck some of his more finicky contemporaries as *badly* finished, with the paint splashed on, and the impasto half a finger thick.

NO art historian has devoted as much time to "The Polish Rider" as Julius Held. His long article about the painting, which appeared in the *Art Bulletin* forty-six years ago, was his first major work and his "calling card"—as he still thinks of it—to the American art world. He first saw the painting in 1934, when, aged twenty-nine, he arrived in New York from Germany and went almost immediately to the Frick. As a young art historian specializing in Flemish and Dutch painting, he had been working as an assistant in the state museums in Berlin. In April, 1933, like many other Jews in Germany, he lost his job. He was fortunate to be taken up by an American financier, Clarence Palitz, who wanted advice on assembling an art collection, and who sponsored his voyage to the United States. From 1937 to 1970, Held taught at Barnard and Columbia, his six annual courses always including one on Rembrandt, and frequently incorporating visits with his students to the Frick to study "The Polish Rider" and, in later years, to the Metropolitan to look at the "Aristotle Contemplating a Bust of Homer." At Barnard, he became professor of art history and chairman of the Art History Department. Among Held's principal works are a two-volume catalogue of the oil sketches of Rubens and a collection, "Rembrandt's Aristotle and Other Rembrandt Studies," which includes the article on "The Polish Rider."

Since 1971, Held has been living in quasi-retirement in Old Bennington, Vermont (I visited him there last year), giving occasional lectures, writing, and examining paintings for dealers and collectors. Now eighty-four, with a deeply lined face and a good head of brushed-back graying hair, Held spends most mornings in the large library of his home, which is just down the road from a handsome 1805 clapboard church, and from the graveyard where Robert Frost is buried.

Held grimaced at the mention of the R.R.P. "You mean the Amsterdam Mafia," he said. He has studied the "Corpus"—too expensive for him to purchase—in the library of the Clark

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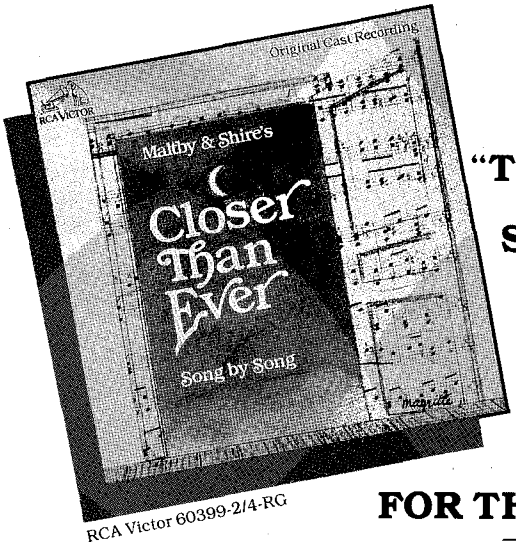

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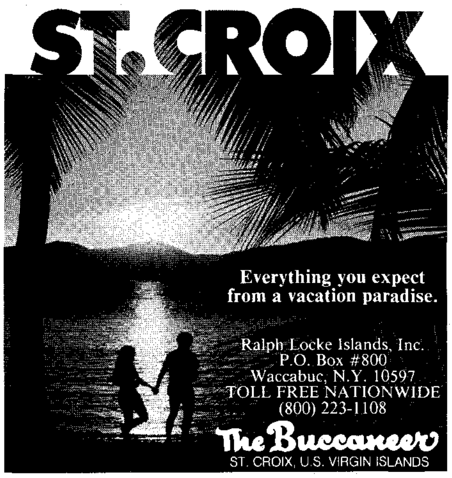

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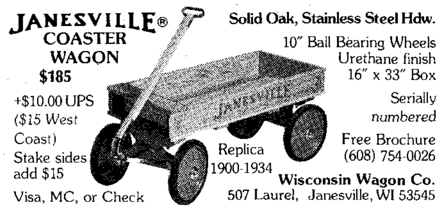

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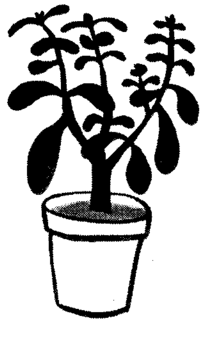
Institute, in nearby Williamstown, and it has bolstered suspicions he already had about group connoisseurship. He told me, “In our field, it’s hard to get two people to agree totally. As for five—impossible. To achieve a consensus in print, much disagreement must be hidden. Then, there is always bound to be a mixture of the objective and the subjective, which the Project plays down. And, perhaps most worrying of all, I find in the ‘Corpus’ a peculiar insensitivity to the works themselves. The members of the team are more concerned with details—a leg, a foot, a lace collar—than they are with the over-all feeling.”



Held is fully prepared to acknowledge that many paintings traditionally attributed to Rembrandt are not by the Master. “Gerson did a good job of cutting down an inflated œuvre,” he said. “But the process has to stop at a certain reasonable point. Of course, there will always be marginal cases where disagreement is possible. However, ‘The Polish Rider’ is not one of those cases.” His own involvement with the painting remains intense, and he has kept up with scholarly writing about it. Going over some of this now, he said that he found unconvincing the suggestion that the painting has a connection with the Socinians: “They were pacifists—one of them wouldn’t be shown bearing arms.” As for the Prodigal Son theory, where’s the bag for the young man’s money? Held agreed that the rider probably does wear Polish costume, and that there is quite likely a link with one of the Ogińskis who were in the Netherlands in the mid-seventeenth century. But, unlike Ben Broos, who has proposed this, Held does not believe the picture is a straightforward portrait. “I feel it is an idealized portrait, perhaps commissioned by the younger Ogiński brother, Marcyan, who was nineteen in 1650, the year he matriculated at Leiden University—a portrait done in terms of a youthful Polish national hero who fought against Eastern intruders, like Marc Sobieski, or such leaders in battle against the Tatars and Turks as Prince John Radziwill, of Lithuania, and the famed Albanian Giorgio Castriota, known as Scanderbeg.” Held believes that it would have been possible for young Marcyan Ogiński to have himself portrayed in that guise, just as Dutch burghers and their wives had themselves limned as, say, Antony and Cleopatra.

Held admitted that he was not an expert at distinguishing the work of various Rembrandt pupils, but, with the first volume of Sumowski’s catalogue open before him, he examined the illustrations of the Drosts. “Pleasant pictures, smoothly modelled, all very decent—he gets the chiaroscuro—but pedestrian in comparison with Rembrandt. No, it cannot be.” He turned to a six-by-seven-inch Frick print of “The Polish Rider” and a postcard detail of the rider’s head and shoulders, which I had put on the table, and said, his voice rising with urgency, “Look! Look at the face of that young man! The free modelling, the freedom of handling of the brush, everything so boldly handled! When you turn to Drost, or any of the pupils, you look in vain for this level of work. And what about the horse? No self-respecting Dutchman would have a horse that looked like this. This is a useful old horse that clearly grew out of Rembrandt’s drawing of the skeletal horse and rider—you can see the bones there. And see how horse and rider move from left to right, and how the rider’s head seems to be on the point of coming out from the looming presence of the hill to the lightness of the sky—it hasn’t yet, but is just about to, and the viewer feels that, anticipates it. Then note the little watch fire with people around it, painted with knowhow, evoking a sleepy mood in the background, and reminding one of other works by Rembrandt. And, as for the finished or unfinished quality of the background—well, to me it is the way Rembrandt often painted his backgrounds. It is broad. He is not a *Kleinmeister*, involved in niggling things. And although I see a break between foreground and background—perhaps the lack of cohesion the Project talks about—it has a purpose. It causes the rider and horse to stand out in the light of dawn against the nocturnal setting. Are those people blind?”

For the members of the R.R.P., I

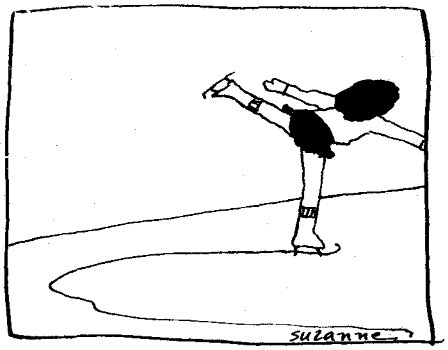
suspect, Julius Held's feeling about "The Polish Rider" would disqualify him as a reliable advocate. But certain things happen when a human being stands in front of a picture that are not entirely rational. Gary Schwartz confesses to having undergone as a student in the presence of Rembrandt's work "moments of something like mystic transport." David Freedberg, in the course of a rational enough conversation about the R.R.P., said of "The Polish Rider," "It continues to move me." More than lesser artists, Rembrandt makes us share his own feelings about youth, old age, isolation, and love.

The R.R.P. is clearly chary of this emotional impact. (What if that name Rembrandt were removed from "The Polish Rider"—what then would we see and feel?) The artist they seem to envision is one with a piercing imagination, immense concentration, and consciousness of being extraordinary. For many, however, Rembrandt's personality is less rigorous and single-minded. There is often a "doubleness" or "otherness" to be seen in his works. To Eugène Fromentin, it often seemed that Rembrandt was "looking elsewhere." As for "The Polish Rider," which Kenneth Clark called "the most personal and mysterious of his later paintings," Arthur Wheelock thinks that "its very strength comes from the tension between the many elements in it and the many traditions it draws on." Although the subject of the picture and the purpose of the rider remain uncertain, that very uncertainty (who is he? where is he going?), made manifest in paint, could be a strong argument for those who think that the Rembrandt Research Project is riding in the wrong direction.

Josua Bruyn has said that the R.R.P., before coming to its final decision on "The Polish Rider," will have to "look closely at Rembrandt's work in the sixteen-fifties." (There seems to be no dissent, at least, on 1655 as the approximate date for the painting of "The Polish Rider," although this conjecture has hitherto been based on the understanding that the picture was by Rembrandt and represented his way of working at that time.)

What about those years, and his life in them? Bruyn has not said anything about looking closely at Rembrandt's *life* in the sixteen-fifties. The first two volumes of the "Corpus" appeared to shun the artist who actually painted the pictures they were examining in such detail. A doctrine current among some scholars concerns the dangers of the "biographical fallacy," which is to believe that one can find the artist in his works—a process that, in a vicious circle, could lead one to attribute works to the artist whose personality one has thus conjured up. This anti-biographical attitude is perhaps in part a reaction to the excesses of past writers who—as van de Wetering has remarked—saw the morals of the man reflected in his paintings, and therefore, because of such pictures as the one of Rembrandt carousing with Saskia in his lap, took him to be a boozy spendthrift. Some contemporary experts, like Alpers and Schwartz, see a man whose work they regard as done almost wholly in reaction to his patrons and "the market." According to the "Corpus," Rembrandt supplied paintings after 1656 generally in order to pay off debts. Artists, like writers or composers, may indeed produce works for a market, for interested purchasers, but their work usually arises out of their own compulsions, interests, strengths, and apprehensions. And so Rembrandt's close and loving drawings of women and children, his marvellously observant Biblical etchings are not simply hackwork but were impelled by his nature, by the man he was.

In 1654, a two-year-old Anglo-Dutch war came to an end. An economic recession was felt throughout the decade. In 1653, trade was nearly at a standstill, fifteen hundred houses stood empty in Amsterdam, and the city fathers decided not to build the second story of the new town hall. In 1655, evidently feeling more buoyant, they went on with the building. Amsterdam continued to be one of the most welcoming, tolerant, and wealth-creating cities in Europe, though one in which the Calvinist ascendancy periodically made itself felt. Hellfire and damnation were part of the atmosphere. For Rembrandt's household, ecclesiastical trouble came in the form of the local church council's admonishing Rembrandt's common-law wife, Hendrickje, for living "like a whore" with the artist. (Hendrickje gave birth to Rembrandt's daughter Cornelia in the latter half of 1654.) And there were constant reminders of mortality. The plague hit Amsterdam in 1656 and caused the death of nearly eighteen thousand people. Rembrandt's most talented pupil, Carel Fabritius, had been killed in an explosion of the Delft arsenal, in 1654. The artist's financial problems, which seemed to be caused by his expensive house and expensive art-buying habits (and possibly by unwise or unlucky investments), intensified at this time: some of his possessions were auctioned off at the Keizerskroon Inn in 1655; he was declared insolvent in the following year; more of his possessions were then sold; and, finally, in 1660, his large Breestraat house was sold.



A few other facts about Rembrandt during this time: He still had a number of talented pupils. He visited Jan Six on his country estate at Ijmond and drew him there, writing. He was in contact with such eminent physicians as Dr. Arnout Tholincx, the inspector of the Amsterdam Medical Colleges, whose portrait he both etched and painted in 1656, and Tholincx's successor in that post, Dr. Jan Deyman, whose "Anatomy Lesson" he painted in the same year. He had professional dealings with a printseller, a goldsmith, an art dealer, a writing master, and a Portuguese-Jewish merchant, and with the bailiff of the Court of Insolvency, known as Old Haaring, whose portrait he etched. He seems to have been able to turn adversity into copy. An inventory made for the court in July, 1656, lists among his works various landscapes—by twilight, with mountains, and unfinished—and also a painting referred to simply as "a horse, from life." (One wonders. No painting of a horse by itself survives.) The inventory reminds us that he still had among his possessions at this time numerous bows, arrows, and swords. The curved sabre in "The Polish Rider" appears to be the weapon from his armory which is

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to be seen hanging on a wall in his sixteen-thirties painting "The Raising of Lazarus."

As for Willem Drost, where was he at this time? If what Houbraken had to say is credited, and one takes into account the self-portrait by Drost in the Uffizi, dated circa 1655, and the document concerning it in the Florentine archives, it seems likely that he was in Italy. "The Polish Rider" isn't known to have ever been in Italy. It is a fairly large picture—not the sort of work most painters would have produced without a specific commission. And if Drost at this period, wherever he was, is to be judged by his signed Rembrandtesque paintings, they appear to be closer to Rembrandt's style of the sixteen-thirties than to that of the sixteen-fifties.

"THE Rembrandt Research Project is just a stage in the history of connoisseurship," Arthur Wheelock says, calmly taking the long view. He points out that the Rembrandts that Horst Gerson de-attributed several decades ago, to anguished reactions, are not necessarily gone for good: the "Saul and David" in the Mauritshuis and the 1650 "Self-Portrait" in the National Gallery in Washington have their defenders, and Volume I of the R.R.P. "Corpus" reinstates the portrait Rembrandt did of himself in Oriental costume with a poodle, at the Petit Palais in Paris. Other scholars don't feel quite so relaxed. Michael Kitson says, "There is no doubt that someone else will do a corpus in the future, but I don't think it will be for another fifty years." David Freedberg believes that, although not all of the R.R.P.'s negative judgments may stand, its impact will be lasting, and there will be great difficulty in again bringing about an expansion of Rembrandt's œuvre. Josua Bruyn says confidently that the chance of reacceptance of paintings rejected by the R.R.P. is very, very slight. And Gary Schwartz has somewhat masochistically remarked that once a painting was dropped as a Rembrandt it would be in "a category in which it would find itself in the company of some of the ugliest Dutch paintings of the seventeenth century."

But the Rembrandt Research Project itself is subject to change, and it is scarcely halfway through its self-appointed task. Two of its original members have gone. Josua Bruyn says, "We all get older, and human memory and human perseverance are limited." Like Bruyn, Bob Haak says, "It has all gone on too long." Both Bruyn and Haak are aware of the problem involved in seeing a picture in, say, 1970 and writing it up in 1990. Haak is uneasy about his memory of paintings seen so long ago, some of which may not be easily revisited. Bruyn believes that the Project's method of study and the language it uses in its notes will enable any new members to make judgments of the sort he would approve of, but he agrees that new members should also see paintings for themselves, and therefore views may change. Some close observers of the Project feel that as Volume III of the "Corpus" is published, and as Josua Bruyn's great stamina runs down, a shift is already taking place. The baton in what seems to be both a relay and a marathon is being handed over to Ernst van de Wetering.

Although van de Wetering holds Bruyn's old professorship, he is a man of different temperament. Someone who has studied under both men says, "Bruyn is more rational, van de Wetering more intuitive." Van de Wetering had academic training as a painter before going on to study art history; when he grapples with the difficult business of expressing in words how a painter paints, it is with sympathy for the painter's problems. He is a jovial man, not only aware of the attachment that many people feel for Rembrandt but giving the impression that he doesn't hold it against them. He says he is committed to the methodology of the Project—starting from doubt, looking hard and long at the painting as an object—but he also told me, "Basically, I stand for having more shades between certainty and uncertainty. Of course, the Project is trying for as much certainty as possible—that's in the tradition of all connoisseurs who make an œuvre catalogue. Yet we need to express the fact that sometimes a firm decision can't be reached. In future, we may have to expose in public the interaction between the arguments for and against the authenticity of a painting." In his talk at the Frick he had touched on the difficulty of dividing the properties in "The Polish Rider" between a follower or pupil and Rembrandt: "Where do you cut the umbilical cord between pupil and master? The final answer may never be given."

Yet, if the verdicts of the Rembrandt Research Project under van de Wetering will be less black and white than they have been under Bruyn, with fewer C's and many more B's, the reason may have to do with something more than the personality of van de Wetering. The Project may no longer need to blaze a trail: it has shaken up the world of Rembrandt studies; it has overcome a good deal of inertia and a good many received ideas; it has conveyed some of its doubts to a new generation of museum curators. The Project's membership may change to take account of criticism that the "Corpus" has received for slighting the documents and writings concerning Rembrandt. The R.R.P. is currently talking to Ben Broos, who may not want to be involved in questions of authentication, but who has, van de Wetering believes, "the Rembrandt literature as his piano." Discussions are also being held with a scientific investigator, Mrs. C. M. Groen, now at Cambridge, who has assisted with the "Corpus" and may assume a more permanent role. Still, van de Wetering seems to be taking the lead in these matters. It is also his private view ("Bruyn gets upset about this," he says) that the composition of the Project should be looser—should reach out to such experts as Haverkamp-Begemann and Wheelock, who are at once critical and understanding. "One of my dreams is to have several meetings a year with people like them and discuss as much as we can before the 'Corpus' volumes are published."

Whether van de Wetering's expansiveness will be altogether reflected in the ensuing volumes of the "Corpus" remains to be seen. Time continues to be a problem, for van de Wetering is one of only four professors in the university's art-history faculty, and has all of art from 1400 to 1800 to teach. It will also be interesting to see whether the authority and decisiveness needed for a corpus can be combined with elements that critics of the Project have found lacking—elements that Arthur Wheelock may have in mind when he says, "Modesty and humility are necessary when dealing with great art which has resonances for so many."

EVERY time I am in New York, I visit the Frick. I walk slowly through it, looking at the Vermeers, the Turners, the Bellinis, the Goyas, the Whistlers, the Halses, and the Rembrandts—a college of paintings, one enhancing the next. I sit for a while on a marble seat in the covered courtyard and listen to the plash of the fountain. Voices are hushed, the guards, in their cranberry-red uniforms, uninsistently present. Waxy green plants grow beneath stone columns. Certainly Mr. Frick's hospitality, which can be purchased for three dollars, leads one to bless the memory of the man who in life was a brutal strike breaker and a pioneer insider-trader, in cahoots with J. P. Morgan and Andrew Carnegie.

I wander to the long northwest gallery and pause to pay my respects to the 1658 "Self-Portrait," taking note of that look—at once majestic and full of self-doubt—which the painter addresses to himself, and therefore to the viewer, before moving along to "The Polish Rider." The young man's self-absorption is similar to that of the artist's, as if his thoughts were momentarily distracted from the purpose of his journey. I remember an earlier visit, when two elderly ladies came past the painting while I stood there, and one exclaimed to the other, "Youth! Youth!" I let my mind leap back to the time, seventy-one years ago, when old Mr. Frick, not long before his death, received the art dealer René Gimpel. Gimpel was led by servants to this gallery, where he found Frick. As he records in his memoirs, he thought that since he had last seen the magnate Frick had "grown stouter and entered a more advanced stage of elderliness: His face is crumpling, his pink complexion becoming patchy; his fair beard, which used to be a thick mass, is growing finer. But his cold eyes, grasping and hard under their genial look, remain a clear, beautiful blue." After making that connoisseurlike appraisal of his host, and while attempting to sell Frick a Watteau for a hundred and thirty thousand dollars, Gimpel looked around the room. "The finest picture is the Rembrandt self-portrait. . . . Another magnificent Rembrandt is The Polish Cavalier. . . . If his face were not that of a young man, I would swear it is the Wandering Jew who goes there, in that landscape in which all uncertainties are summed up, in which home and hearth move farther away at each step, where the air is one immense doubt."

—ANTHONY BAILEY

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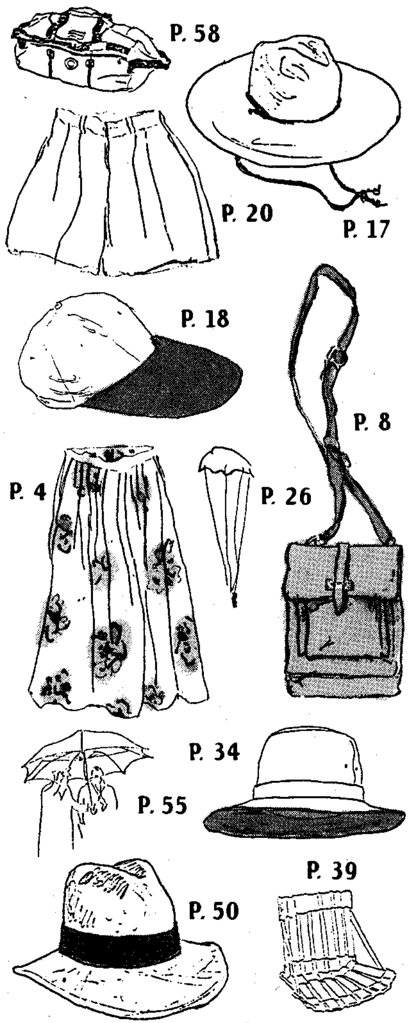

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MUSICAL EVENTS

The Magic Net That Holds Us

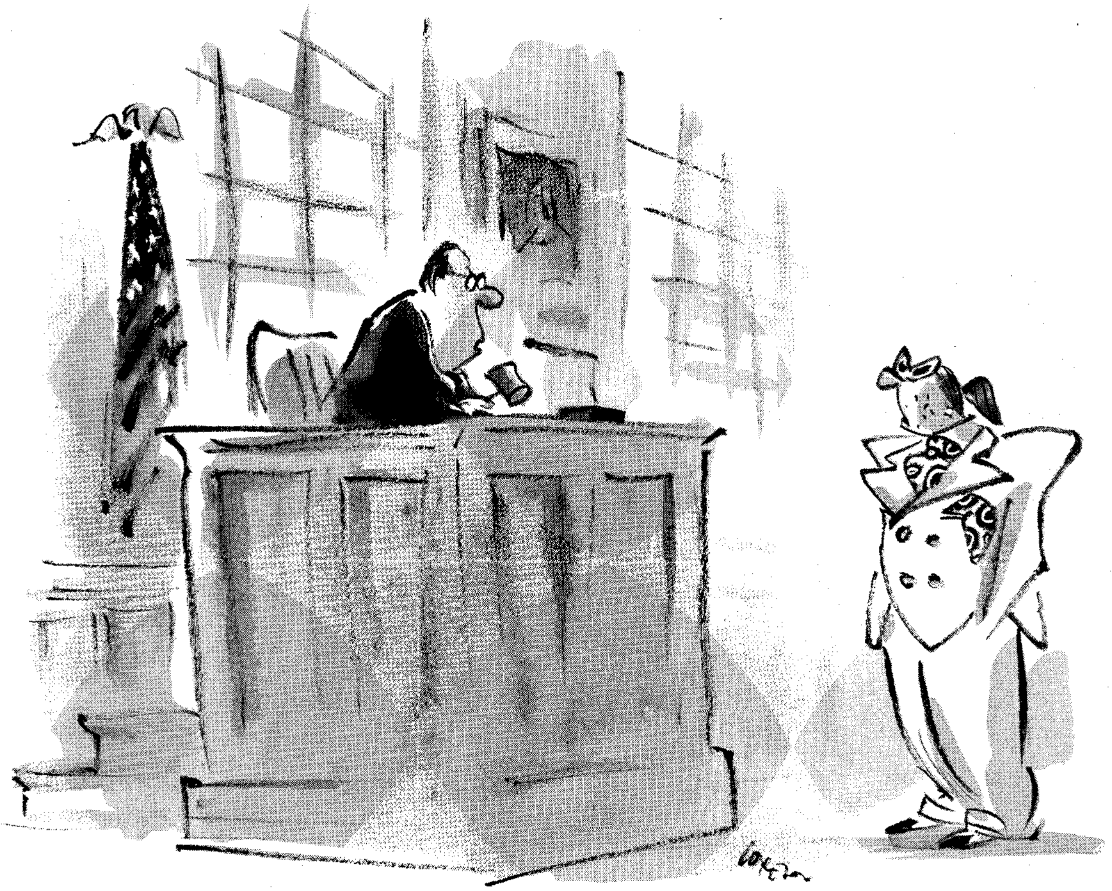
Michael Tippett's "The Knot Garden," which was given five performances last month by the Cincinnati College–Conservatory of Music, is an arresting and beautiful opera. It was first staged in this country, by Northwestern University, in 1974, but I had not seen it since its première, some three years earlier, at Covent Garden. The memory of the work remained strong. As I read reviews of later productions—David Freeman's for the Opera Factory and the London Sinfonietta, in 1984; Nicholas Hytner's for Covent Garden, two years ago—I longed to see it again. The Cincinnati performance, intelligently and powerfully conceived, lovingly executed, was no disappointment. For the Opera Factory production, which went on tour to several British cities, Meirion Bowen, an associate of Tippett's, reduced the orchestra to chamber size (twenty-two players) and, since much of the opera is chamber-scored anyway, was able to do so without altering any of Tippett's notes. Cincinnati gave the American première of this version. We lose a few special sonorities—two piccolos, two double-basses, the sound of full strings in some passages where it seems to be needed—but, on the other hand, the opera becomes accessible to companies unable to afford a full-orchestra complement. The small-orchestra operas of Benjamin Britten—especially "The Rape of Lucretia" and "The Turn of the Screw"—provide the English-speaking world with much of its contemporary repertory; scarcely a month goes by without news of a production somewhere. "The Knot Garden" in its chamber version will now perhaps join them.

I am reluctant to play favorites among Tippett's five operas. All of them—the lyrically abundant "Midsummer Marriage," the epic "King Priam," the intimate "Knot Garden," and "The Ice Break" and "New Year," which bring together what we read in the papers and see on television with what the Greek dramatists, Shakespeare, Goethe, and other great poets have taught us—are, along with the oratorios "A Child of Our Time," "The Vision of Saint Augustine," and "The Mask of Time," necessary works. They explore our present and explore our past, connecting and clarifying. Tippett once defined his "function within a society which embraces all of us" as:

> To continue an age-old tradition . . . to *create images from the depths of the imagination* and to give them form whether visual, intellectual or musical. For it is only through images that the inner world communicates at all. Images of the past, shapes of the future. Images of vigour for a decadent period, images of calm for one too violent. Images of reconciliation for worlds torn by division. And in an age of mediocrity and shattered dreams, images of abounding, generous, exuberant beauty.

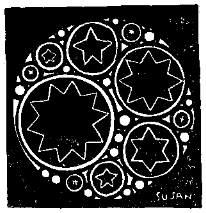
And after the Cincinnati production of "The Knot Garden" I would hardly dispute Bowen's declaration that "it has the most consistent marriage of words, music and dramatic action of all the Tippett operas."

If Tippett's first opera, "The Midsummer Marriage," is a twentieth-century "Magic Flute," finally affirmative and optimistic (though even denser in allegory and allusion), "The Knot Garden," his third opera, is—well, something between "Le Nozze di Figaro" and "Così Fan Tutte." Like "Figaro," it explores the intricate mazes of love in all its bewildering aspects. Like "Così," it ends largely unresolved. Perhaps Faber and Thea, engineer and contemporary earth mother, whose faltering marriage has initiated the action, will come together again. (The last line of the opera, which they share, as they move toward one another, is "The curtain rises.") Dov and Mel, the gay couple, pretty-white-boy and strong-sexy-black, musician and poet, break up irrevocably. (Dov's subsequent adventures



"Guilty of flaunting it without having it. Sixty days."

form the matter of Tippett's orchestral song cycle "Songs for Dov.") What will happen to the virginal Flora—near-molested by her foster father, Faber; drawn into an illusory but captivating brief romance with Dov; near-raped by Mel—and what will happen to Denise, the freedom fighter, the Vanessa Redgrave figure distracted from her mission by sexual attraction to Mel, is still unsure. The analyst Mangus, who puts the characters through their paces by playing a Prospero to the various "Tempest" roles he assigns them, declares himself at the last a fraud, a charlatan. But his charades have had their effect. By the close, both the characters and the listeners understand themselves better: by way of Shakespeare, Goethe, Lewis Carroll, Yeats, Eliot, and Virginia Woolf (whose "Between the Acts" is emotionally and structurally close to "The Knot Garden"); by way of Beethoven, Schubert, and whoever composed the blues and "We Shall Overcome"; and, most of all, by way of Tippett himself, who comprehended all this and ordered it for our understanding. As Bowen says, "If we analyse a single day in our lives in the Tippett-ian manner, we could well find just as much strangeness, tension and illogicality in our dealings with friends and associates." The music, from the twelve-note "tempest" theme at the start through all the duets, arias, and ensembles, the sudden juxtapositions, the jump cuts and dissolves, is exciting, inventive, and beautiful. "The Knot Garden" two decades after its première—like "Così Fan Tutte" two centuries after its première—is an opera that still strikes home.



The setting, according to the libretto, is a "labyrinth or rosegarden" that "changes with the inner situations." In Cincinnati, Paul Shortt had designed a garden set of paths intersecting, paths cut short, sudden plunges, pits, which the director, Malcolm Fraser, could fill with action and imagery that made vivid the whirl of relationships. There were two casts. I saw both, and both of them had evidently thought hard about the opera and its meanings. Particularly striking were the two Mels—Lourin Plant and Michael Harper—as each played at once the Mel of the opera and the Caliban role assigned to Mel by Mangus/Prospero. This kind of double and triple sensibility—to Shakespeare, to the 1970 opera, and to an audience for whom the thoughts and catchphrases of two decades ago are history—informed all the production. The presentation was keen. Let me single out also the Dov of Robert Ashcraft, who did not look his part but sang it with the full, uninhibited lyricism that its London performers did not achieve; Susan Pfau-Smith's delicate and accurate Flora; and the Denise of Robin Carrington, who sang the melismas in her entrance aria intensely and purely, charging them with the raw, almost unbearable emotion implicit in Tippett's florid writing. But the singling out is invidious. Even if one or two of the singers were tainted at times by the "wah-waw," covered sounds that turn what should be forwardly projected English words into "vocalism," these were two ensemble casts that brought the opera to life, offering a musical and dramatic adventure.

Gerhard Samuel conducted a masterly, dedicated performance. Julie Adams' eloquent cello solos deserve a special mention. One big "but." "The Knot Garden" was given in the smaller of the Conservatory's auditoriums, the Patricia Corbett Theatre, which holds about four hundred. It has admirable sight lines and intimacy. It is well equipped with lanterns, and James Gage's alert lighting was an important part of the show. But apparently it has wretched acoustics. The orchestra pit is very deep: the players can have no visual contact and little aural contact with the singers. And the singers were all individually amplified, by way of microphones concealed in or apparent on their costumes. Amplification is necessary, I was told, if voices are to get out into the house. These voices were amplified to an extent that put the balance in the ensembles under the fingers of whoever was at the control board. The first-act finale emerged not in perspective, spanning the stage as character after character breaks in, but from a centralized bank of loudspeakers. It may be that Cincinnati is preparing its students for the new world of opera: London, I learn, will soon have a seven-thousand-seat "house" (a tent) in which amplified voices will be heard in popular nine-

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teenth-century operas. "The Knot Garden" is an opera of another kind.

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THE Philadelphia Orchestra, the Westminster Symphonic Choir, and Riccardo Muti came to Carnegie last month with a double bill of two famous sacred pieces: Pergolesi's Stabat Mater and Cherubini's C-minor Requiem. The Pergolesi, composed in 1736, was the work most often printed in the eighteenth century. The Cherubini—a work championed by Toscanini, Giulini, and Muti (all three have recorded it)—was composed in 1816, for an anniversary of Louis XVI's execution. Beethoven declared that if ever he were to write a Requiem Cherubini's C-minor Requiem would be his model; Berlioz, Brahms, Schumann, and John Henry Newman were among its high admirers.

The music of Pergolesi, who was trained and spent much of his short life in Naples, is dear to the Philadelphia's and La Scala's Neapolitan conductor. The second opera at La Scala this season was Pergolesi's "Lo Frate'nnamorato," conducted by Mr. Muti; and, by all accounts, it was immensely successful. The Stabat Mater is an intimate piece, written for soprano and alto, strings, and organ continuo, and Carnegie did not seem to be quite the right place for it. Mr. Muti had reduced the band and had evidently asked for light playing, but his phrasing tended to be rather smooth and plump. Although Patricia Schuman, who was the soprano, is always an arresting performer, her modern voice—essentially an extended mezzo—did not suit music composed for a pure, technically adept performer; her attempts to hit high, trilled G's on the syllables of "pertransivit," in the first aria, were awkward. Susanne Mentzer, the alto, had purer tones in her lower and middle registers, but there was some distortion when the music rose.

The performance of the Cherubini, on the other hand, was noble and moving. Berlioz wrote of the work's "abundance of idea, fulness of form, and sustained sublimity of style." Every effect is pondered, calculated. The "Recordare" flows in five-bar vocal periods over accompaniment in two-bar groupings; "Quam olim Abrahae promisisti" is a prodigious contrapuntal feat, with a five-bar fugue subject; the urgent triple imperatives of the Agnus fade into G minor, into F minor, and then into uncertainty until a sustained low G points a way to what Cardinal Newman called "the lovely note C which keeps recurring as the Requiem approaches eternity." But Cherubini's art is not ostentatious or obtrusive. Mr. Muti's interpretation was large, loving, and scrupulous. The dynamics were precise. The orchestral playing was grave, beautiful, and clear, and the singing of the large chorus was sure. Although the music is formal, it is not unemotional. The Cherubini enthusiast Edward Bellasis wrote, in 1912:

> Cherubini's sun—or star shall I call it?—will shine so long as music is music and not mere science and noise. It is no flickering flame or faint twinkle. After over a century it gives a steady light still. This reputedly cold man can subdue us to tears or shake us with fear. "Médée" is full of deepest sentiment. When real masterpieces of his begin, like the latter, or the "Water Carrier" or the two Requiems, we feel their power; we have to listen, and "the mariner has his will."

Still true today. Cherubini speaks to modern listeners. He has not been quite forgotten: "Médée" was staged in Boston two years ago, and at Covent Garden last year; his other operas have occasional European revivals. This fine account of the Requiem leads one to hope that Mr. Muti will bring more Cherubini music to New York.

—ANDREW PORTER

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WE DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT DEPARTMENT

[*From the St. John* (*New Brunswick*) *Telegraph-Journal*]

FreezCo of Richibucto has been given $7,310 for a study into the feasibility of establishing a child storage facility at Cap-Lumiere.

1990 spring selections

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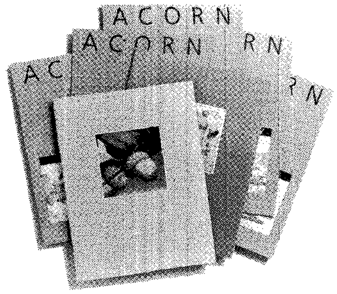

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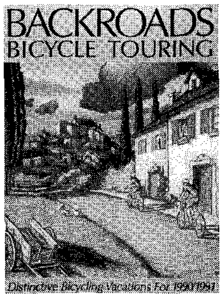

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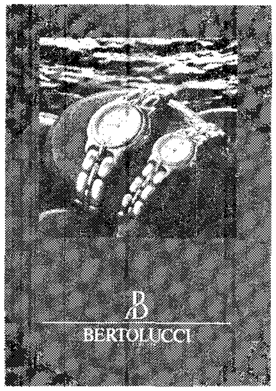

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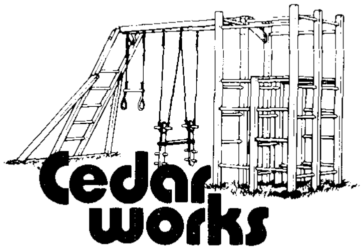

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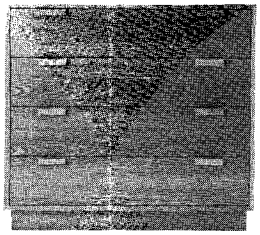

Charles Webb, designer/woodworker, presents his new catalogue as the benchmark of thirty years of making furniture of original and useful design. Discover designs in oak and cherry to facilitate sitting, sleeping, dining, working, and keeping one's possessions in order. 51 McGrath Highway, Somerville, MA 02143. **$4.00.**

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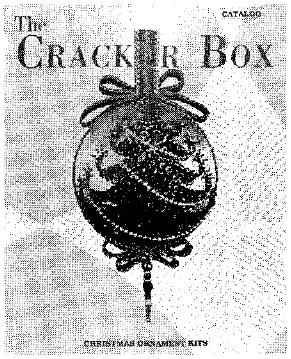

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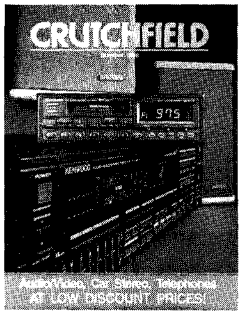

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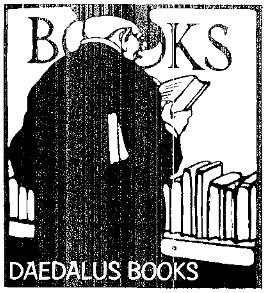

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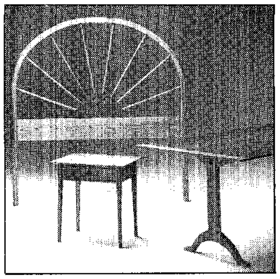

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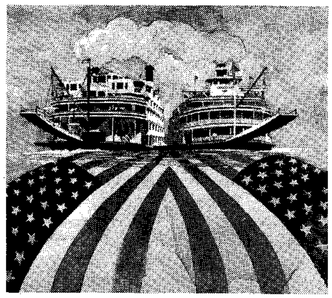

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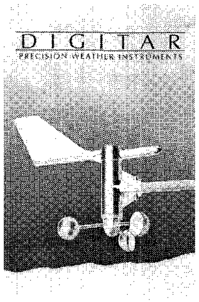

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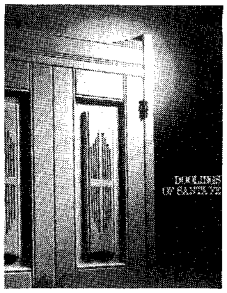

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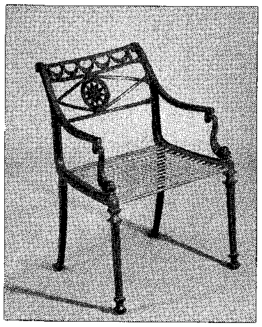

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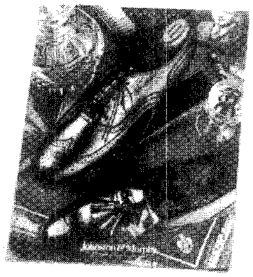

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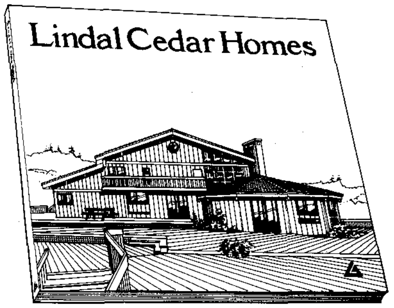

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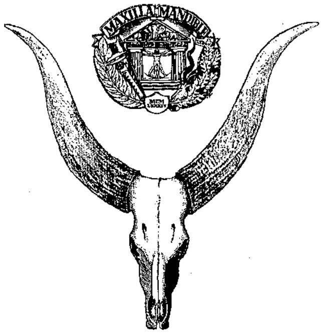

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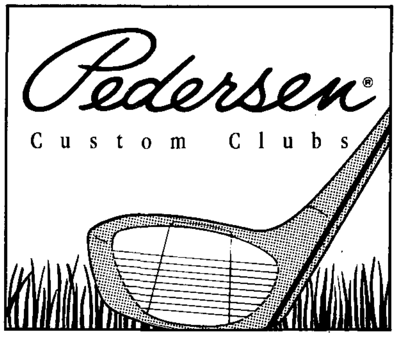

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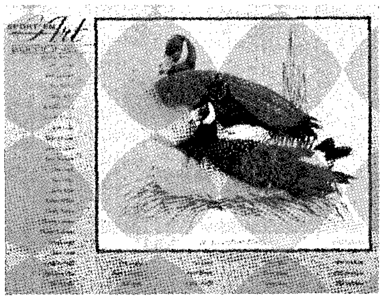

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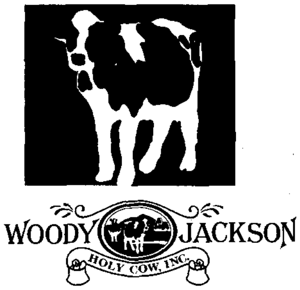

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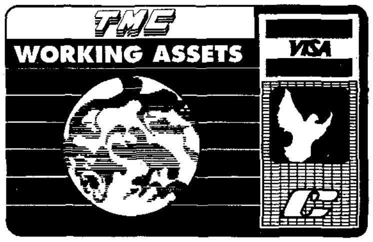

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THE THEATRE

Played Out

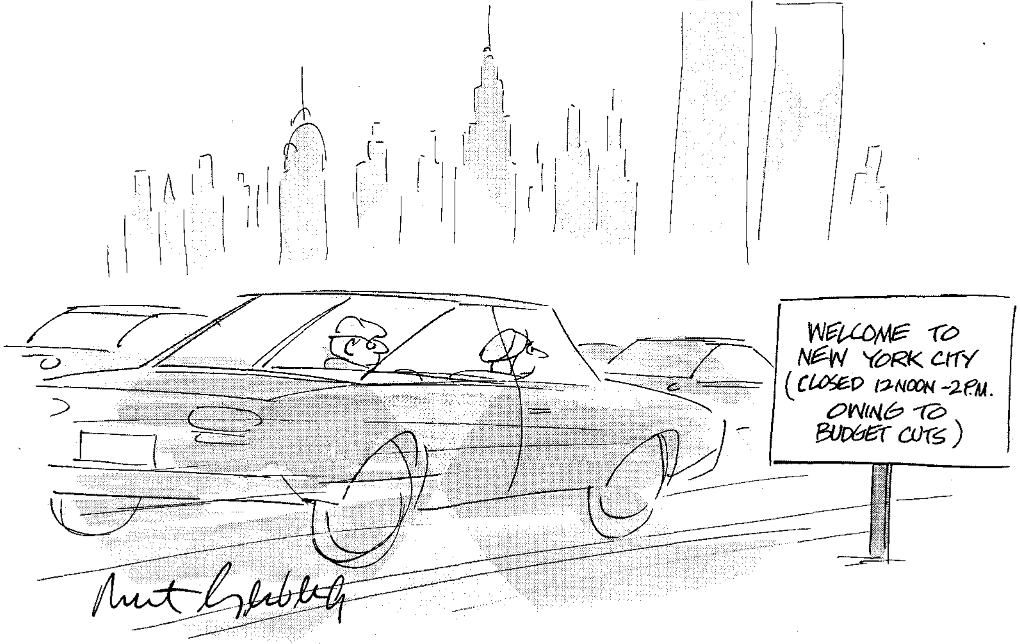
STEVE TESICH'S "Square One," at the Promenade, is a two-character play about contemporary love and marriage which will either charm you to pieces or irritate the hell out of you. It's currently being given a bang-up production by the Second Stage, which has certainly brought in the big guns: the play is directed by Jerry Zaks and lighted by Paul Gallo; it has sets by Tony Walton and thematic costumes by Ann Roth. It also features Richard Thomas, and Dianne Wiest in a role that appears to have been written for her.

I say "appears to be" because I didn't read the feature article about "Square One" that ran in the Sunday *Times* the week before the play opened, and so know nothing of its production history. I tried to read it, but after one look at the photograph of Wiest and Thomas unattractively got up in wedding garb I thought, Dear God, not another slightly absurdist play about contemporary love and marriage, and put my head in my hands. Wiest's posture in the picture was the giveaway: the skewed, off-balance, awkward way she sat perched in an oversized rocker—arm dangling, feet canted under her, bewildered smile on her face—told you that "Square One" was going to be one of those plays that use a skeletal plot structure dipped in surreal comedy to tell you how things are between men and women. They never tell you a story, these plays. (If they told you a story, you might come away having learned something about why things are that way.) They often throw up recognizable phenomena, but you never know what it is you're supposed to be recognizing. You get a meeting, a courtship, a marriage, and the dissolution of that marriage—and there's always a wedding dress (it either gets worn by the heroine or figures prominently in the cover art for the program). But the playwright never seems to have very much to say about life or about relations between men and women; he's interested in the wedding dress—marriage as a symbol rather than as a situation in which to explore psychological truth.

Before going on to fault Tesich's play, I should point out that, in view of how tired I am of plays written in this idiom, it's a miracle that I enjoyed "Square One" to the extent I did. It contains a wealth of really funny lines (Tesich is a funny guy)—funnier lines, and more of them, than I've heard in a long time. And they're not one-liners, either. When Thomas, as a newlywed, tells his bride reassuringly that, whatever happens in their marriage, "it will never be my fault," the announcement is funnier for having been established by a courtship that consisted almost entirely of reassurances. Similarly, when Thomas asks her why she wants a divorce, you have to have seen something of the nature of their marriage—schematic though it may be—to get the full effect of Wiest's "Oh, please, if I have to explain, this marriage might last forever!"

From the outset, "Square One" veers strangely between being highly entertaining and being highly uninteresting and precious. Its typical extended joke consists of a banal issue quirkily displayed. Thus, how funny you will find Miss Wiest's long disquisition on movie music will probably depend a good deal on how important the soundtrack is in your own life. (And there are times when "Square One" seems specifically aimed at more or less creative types: artists, writers, theatre folk, and—well, critics.) Still, as long as "Square One" seems a distillation of the dynamics of contemporary life and relations (which isn't very long), it has the capacity to amuse. Thomas's character introduces himself proudly as a "state artist, third class"; Wiest's character lives with eight relatives and can't imagine what it's like to have her own apartment. The two revel in the experience of securing a bench to themselves during "prime park time" and, when they consider marriage, talk about "getting by" on what little freedom they have.

At what point such details stop seeming funny depends on when you realize that Tesich means them not figuratively, as a hyperbolic expression of modern life, but as elements of a futuristic world that he wants us to take literally. Mr. Thomas and Miss Wiest are living in a totalitarian state. We're in negative-utopia country, as it turns out, and I can't tell you how disappointing it is to discover that all the talk about "freedom" is intended as a political statement, and to find out that Thomas's line about "how hard it is to become a second-class artist" is intended as a serious statement about



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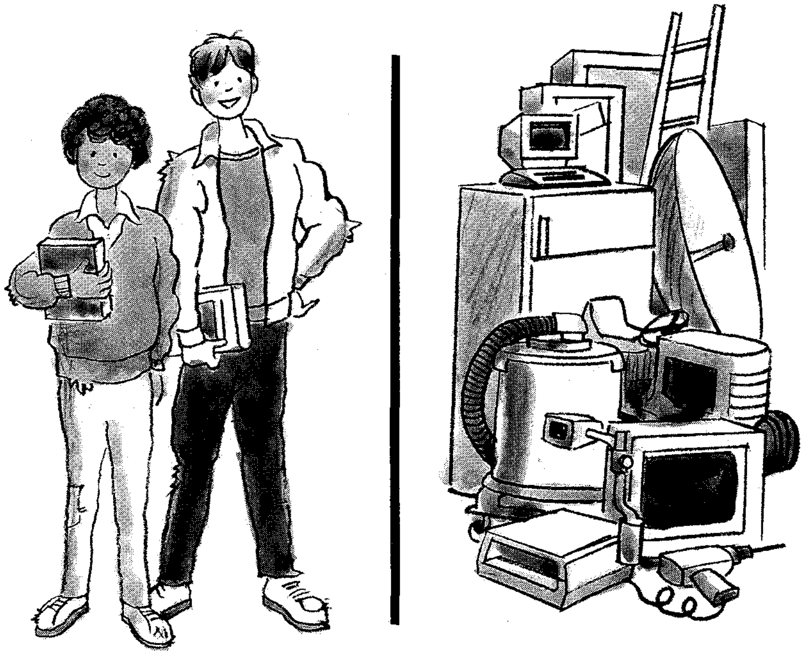

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the critical bureaucracy that categorizes art. You don't know whether to gag or to weep.

The friend who came with me to see "Square One" says she likes Dianne Wiest because Dianne Wiest looks like a real person, and that is true—she does look like a real person. I only wish she would occasionally behave like one. Wiest is such an inveterate ham, and the specific things that her performance style consists of—the squint, the falsely high-pitched voice, the mercilessly overplayed line—are so cute (and by now so familiar) that a little of her goes a very long way with me. Tesich's play gives her a chance to be cute on a positively epic scale. She is maddeningly, incessantly adorable: befuddled yet astute. (Her character's chief personality trait is a tendency not to know the word for the thing she is ready to wax wildly articulate about.)

Mr. Thomas's character turns out to be a television entertainer with his heart set on a political career, and that is fortunate. It provides an opportunity for a certain amount of social satire—of campaign politics and the entertainment industry (and the area where the two converge)—and it's here that Jerry Zaks comes into his own. In the political sequences and the musical interludes (there *are* musical interludes), Thomas's performance has such bite, such wicked subtlety, that you find yourself longing for the moments when he will be left alone onstage with Zaks' direction. All the same, I can't help thinking that Thomas is being a little hard done by. At times, it almost seemed that he was being exploited: virtually all that is required of him in this role is that he trot out the same old qualities he used to project as John Boy, on "The Waltons"—an air of earnestness and sweet reasonableness and dependability—and allow the playwright and the director to impugn them. And that, in view of how hard this actor has tried to leave his past behind him and dissociate himself from the television character he created in his youth, is a shame. It's as though Mr. Tesich were saying, "Let's take the values of Waltonesque America and try to put another construction on them." That isn't very hard to do. In fact (take heart, Mr. Thomas), by putting the wrong construction on it you can make just about anything seem sinister. —MIMI KRAMER

LETTER FROM LONDON

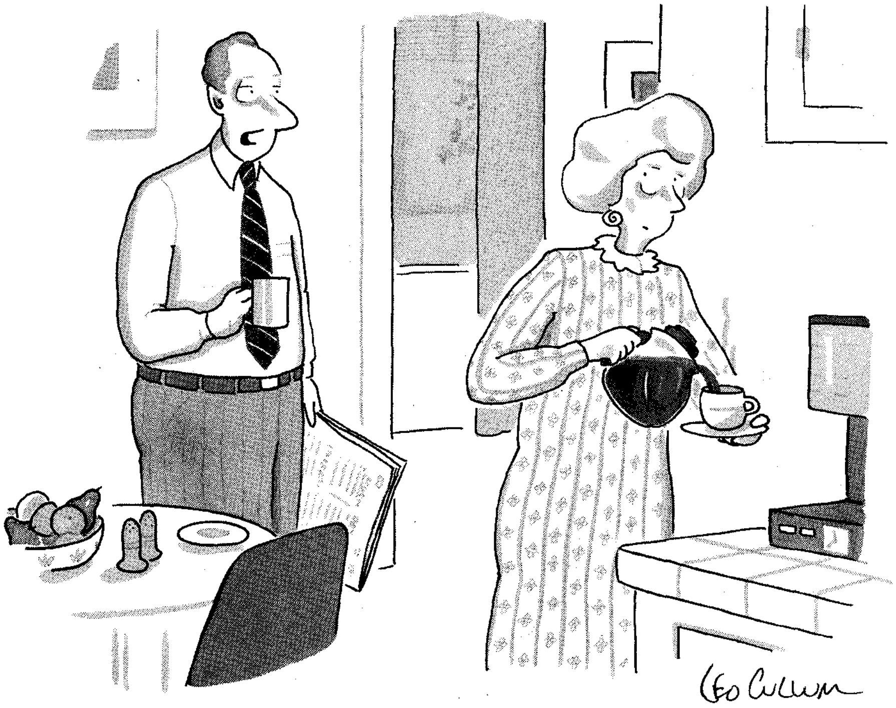
"THE best show in town" opened late last November, with the unusual promise from backers that it would definitely run for eight months. The latest Lloyd Webber, or the speedy return of Dustin Hoffman after his triumphant Shylock? Not a bit of it: the new entertainment promised us was the televised proceedings of the House of Commons. And, in the finest traditions of show biz, the high claim made for this live matinée show (Mondays through Fridays) came from one of its principal actors: Sir Bernard Weatherill, Speaker of the House, a Tory M.P. elected into benign impartiality by his office. The sixty-nine-year-old Sir Bernard, scion of a tailoring business that once presented jodhpurs to the Queen, now stands before the TV cameras as well as before the unruly House in buckle shoes, black stockings, bridal-length black gown, and full, clavicle-tickling wig. Bizarrely, he has landed himself the double job of Parliamentary disciplinarian and TV warmup man. The barker outside the fairground boxing booth turns up inside as referee.

The British Parliament, which in the eighteenth century tried to jail those who sought to accurately report its activities, had doggedly resisted the claims of television since they were first debated, twenty-three years ago. Coverage of the House of Lords was permitted a few years ago, though it can't be said that this golden-age soap opera has pulled in many viewers: everyone in the Upper House is formidably polite (some with the civility of Morpheus) and makes a show of listening to the opposing arguments. This has not been the stuff of drama or ratings; on the other hand, it did point up the anomaly whereby the business of the Upper House was available to the citizen in normal televisual reality, while that of the Lower was represented on the nine-o'clock news by colored drawings of the action, backed by a radio tape.

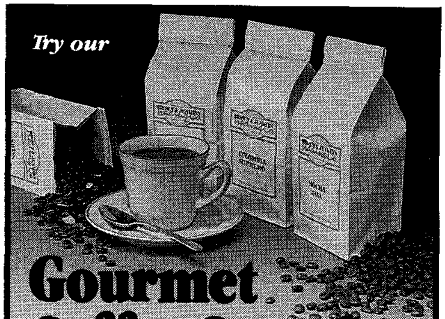
There were, of course, the usual arguments beforehand. Television would detract from the dignity of the House; M.P.s would play up to the camera; the solemn process of government would fall victim to the TV ambitions of bit-parters. To outsiders, this seemed back to front, since the evidence of radio showed how undignified the House was already. The proceedings sounded to the mere voter's ear less like wise debate than beer-garden babble, with speakers struggling to make themselves heard over the interruptions of gargling shire-voiced Tories and raucous vox-pop Labourites. The Mother of Parliaments—which is how the British are encouraged to think of their legislature—came across more like a fat sow rolling on her farrow. Skeptics also wondered if the cameras were not being kept out of the club by members who didn't want the trouble of smartening up their act. The predominantly male chamber has for decades exhibited a shabbiness unmatched by any other profession except that of Oxford don: the place has been a clothespress of ill-fitting suits, a museum of short socks, a vender's tray of matching tie-'n'-hanx sets, a flour bomb of dandruff. And, just as it remains spectacularly easy for an Oxford don to become famous as a local "character" (wear secondhand clothes, ride a motorbike, sit in the same chair in the same pub every evening), so in the House a career of facetious insult got a man labelled a wit, while the mildest self-indulgence in dress turned you into a dandy. Perhaps this is what they were afraid of letting us see.

Naturally, given the years of suspicion that preceded the introduction of the cameras, and the extra suspicion that the staid have of the flamboyant, strict rules were laid down about where the camera's snout could wander. General, wide-angle establishing shots of the House are permitted, but thereafter the director must (for the trial period, at least) follow a set of guidelines designed, according to your point of view, (a) to emphasize the solemnity of the proceedings or (b) to drain events of all possible drama. Thus, the camera must remain on a speaking M.P. for the duration of his or her speech; cutaways to other Members—reaction shots—are permitted only if an M.P. is specifically referred to in the course of the speech; coverage of the press or public galleries is not allowed, nor are pans across the benches; finally, in cases of disorder the camera must either settle for a picture of the Speaker calling the House to order or else revert to a wide shot that does not include a sighting of the fracas. As a set of rules to discourage showmanship and eye-catching bad behavior, it no doubt has its logic; but it reminds the impartial viewer of the stern guidelines that once governed burlesque revue at the old Windmill Theatre. Showgirls were permitted to be naked so long as they didn't move; if anything wobbled, it was against the law.

Not surprisingly, M.P.s have already begun to exploit the restrictions imposed upon the camera. If reaction



"Dear, I'd like to roll our marriage over into an amicable divorce."



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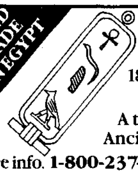

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shots depend upon the naming of an M.P., then the speechifier may be tempted to casually throw in the name of a Member on the opposite benches who is ostentatiously not paying attention. And if the camera is otherwise to be held loyally on the speechifier, then it must also be held on the small cluster of people (members of the same party) beside and behind him or her. This leads to a technique known as "doughnutting," whereby those surrounding the speaker behave as if they had not heard such a riveting speech since Henry V addressed his troops before Agincourt. Doughnutting presents a problem for the smaller parties, and in the beginning the Liberal Democrats were seen to surge en masse (the masse being no more than half a dozen) into the Chamber as soon as one of their number was about to make a televised speech. "Doughnutting!" cried the other parties. Not at all, explained the Liberal Democrats; it's just that when one of us makes a speech, all the others like to listen. . . . There is also the ploy of "negative," or "poisoned," doughnutting. This occurs when a dissident member of a party is attacking his own front bench; in such circumstances, loyalists surrounding the dissident might yawn, scratch, fidget, shake their heads in vigorous negativity, and generally make with the body language.

The launch of "MPTV," as it is known, comes at a point when Mrs. Thatcher has been Prime Minister for ten years and the leader of her party for fifteen; by the time she leads the Conservatives into the next election (in 1991 or, at the latest, 1992), there will be first-time voters who since their earliest years of sentience will have known no other Tory leader (and hence no other Tory tradition—for instance, the "wet," liberal Conservatism of the previous leader, Edward Heath). The opposition parties—which effectively means only Labour, the others having retreated once more to rump status—have known a decade of schism, bickering, and impotence. But now, for the first time in years, the Labour Party is ahead—well ahead—in the opinion polls. And if the political ice packs are breaking up in Eastern Europe, why not at home? Seen from the Opposition benches, Mrs. Thatcher is an outcast among her fellow E.E.C. leaders, cannot boast the cuddly relationship with Bush that she had with Reagan, is incapable of flexible response to the speedy unravelling of Eastern Europe, and remains as dogmatic and doctrinaire in her eleventh year of office as she was in her first. On MPTV, the Labour leader, Neil Kinnock, likes to begin his questions, "Is not the Prime Minister *totally isolated* in her position on . . ." Again and again, Labourites seek to present the Prime Minister as out of touch even with her allies—a leader surrounded by gibbering yes-men who conceal from her the realities of the world.

◆

Isolation, however, is a matter of viewpoint. There was a bubble of excitement at the end of last year, when, for the first time in her fifteen years, Mrs. Thatcher was challenged as the leader of the Conservatives. There is a provision in the Party's rules for an annual challenge, but this was the first time anyone had wanted—or dared—to stand against her. Sir Anthony Meyer, an elderly, wettish backbencher with no obvious political future, put himself forward: he was the sacrificial rabbit, the twittering canary thrust into the coal mine to test the noxious air, or—to submit to the correct animal cliché—the stalking-horse. He wasn't expected to win; what would be interesting was the manner in which he lost. If he raised, say, eighty votes (out of a possible three hundred and seventy-four), then the great she-elephant would be seen to be wounded. If he raised enough to force a second ballot, then the real candidates would emerge: lone predators driven crazy with hunger after chewing long grass on the back benches; carnivorous front-bench pack leaders waiting for the first stumble.

The ballot showed that wherever else Mrs. Thatcher may be isolated, it isn't within the Conservative Party. She received three hundred and fourteen votes, Sir Anthony thirty-three; there were twenty-four spoiled ballot papers and three non-votes. These last two items require some explanation. It may seem odd to outsiders that 7.2 per cent of a party supposedly versed in and proud of the ways of democracy should prove unable to answer a simple question as to which of two individuals it prefers to see leading its party. Not the sort of behavior to set a good example to the electorate at large. Why should an M.P. spoil a ballot paper? Does it mean what it means when a voter does so in a general election: the anarchic addition of an extra name on the paper, a harebrained attempt to vote for more than one candidate, a scrawled obscenity? Apparently, it's not so different. The most plausible explanation to be advanced for the spoiled ballot papers was that the Tory M.P.s in question didn't want to support Mrs. Thatcher but didn't want to confess their treason, either: by voting for both candidates (and thus invalidating their franchise), they could return to their constituencies and assure their more right-wing supporters that of course they had voted for Maggie, while all the time keeping their consciences warm.

The Labour Party, trying to look on the bright side, asserted that this result was exactly what it had wanted: the Prime Minister had been hurt but was still in residence. There is a certain plausibility in the Labour Party's view that Mrs. Thatcher is the Tory Party's greatest handicap (as well as in the Tories' view that she is their greatest strength), but the sight of Labourites congratulating themselves that the Prime Minister will now definitely lead the Conservatives into the next election isn't altogether convincing. Whom would you rather line up against in an Olympic final—a triple gold medallist whose practice times have recently been a bit disappointing or a novice substitute brought in at the last minute?

Labour has naturally greeted MPTV as an opportunity for public demonstration of what it had long felt certain of but had failed to get across at a general election: that the Prime Minister is a pigheaded extremist who has been systematically ruining the country for a decade. The time to make that demonstration is during an institution known as Prime Minister's Question Time, which takes place at three-fifteen every Tuesday and Thursday. This is a moment in the process of government which Parliamentarians refer to proudly: no such equivalent, they point out, occurs in the American system. The Prime Minister is obliged to appear twice a week before the Commons and answer questions for a quarter of an hour from Members on both sides of the House about her duties and the policies of her Government. This, they say, is the moment when a Prime Minister is potentially most vulnerable:

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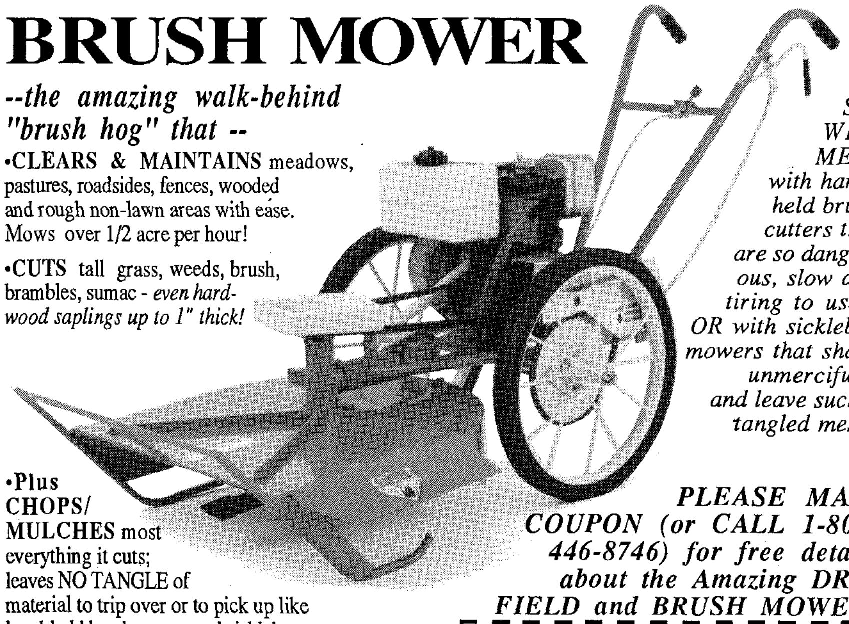

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when Mrs. Thatcher, reliant only on her briefing notes and her wits to handle anything that is thrown at her, may be "bowled out" by the Opposition. The Speaker acts as referee, calling on Members seemingly at random (he usually alternates between sides of the House) while reserving up to three questions for Neil Kinnock, and one for the leader of the Liberal Democrats. This is a moment—both sacred and vital—in the democratic life of the country which at last was to be fully witnessed by the voting public.

Such, at any rate, was the theory. The reality, as it is now disclosed twice weekly live, is a bit less crisp and vibrant. For a start, there is tradition to be obeyed. Thus, each segment of interrogation is preceded by a nominal, not to say fatuous, question—about, for instance, what the Prime Minister is going to do that evening. In reply, she explains that she intends to dine with the Zambian Ambassador, then resumes her seat while the M.P. asks his "real" question. When the Speaker moves the House on to the next topic, the same opening question will be asked, whereupon the Prime Minister will rise, say, "I refer the Honourable Gentleman to the reply I gave some moments ago," and resume her place again to listen to the proper query. There is a lot of standing up and sitting down during Prime Minister's Question Time. When the first question on a topic has been dealt with, M.P.s will seek to "catch the Speaker's eye" in order to ask a supplementary question. This involves leaping vigorously to the feet, looking hopefully in the direction of the Chair, and then relapsing onto the green leather benches, all except for the solitary Member who, by some brief and seemingly arbitrary justice, has been smiled upon by the Speaker. With approximately half the House rising and falling in this manner every thirty seconds or so, the effect is of a ragged yet persistent stadium wave.

This cumbersome method of seeking to extract information from and/or humiliate the Prime Minister is further weighed down by the knowledge that, apart from the Leader of the Opposition, no Member can come back at the P.M. if her answer is deemed unsatisfactory. The Tories, in any case, tend to ask their leader predictable, even toadying, questions, by which she is rarely stretched. At one of the first televised Question Times, for instance, the Conservative backbencher Dame Janet Fookes asked the Prime Minister, "Will my Right Honourable Friend take a little time today to reflect on . . . her own outstanding achievement as Britain's first woman Prime Minister?"—whereupon Mrs. Thatcher willingly did just that. The exchange was more appropriate to the dying years of Ceausescu's Romania than to a Parliament that prides itself on plain speaking. The Labour Party, on the other hand, finds itself torn between (a) turning the question into a speech and (b) trying to bowl her out by asking something she might be unprepared for, or by offering a poisoned question. Giles Radice, M.P. for North Durham since 1973 and a senior Labour backbencher, explains that the best way to do this is to invite her to reflect on the merits of something in which she is known to see no merit. "Would the Prime Minister tell the House what are the positive arguments for joining the Exchange Rate Mechanism?" might embarrass a Prime Minister who cannot think of any positive arguments, while annoying pro-Europe Tories, who disagree with her. Radice suggests that the Prime Minister is bowled out in this way about once a fortnight.

Whether or not the viewing public will notice that the Prime Minister has been bowled out is another matter. Television is not about what happens but about what is seen to happen. An image consultant who approached M.P.s before curtain-up estimated that their viewer impact depended on the following factors: fifty-five per cent on how they looked, thirty-eight per cent on their voice and body language, and seven per cent on what they actually said. Although the House scoffed jollily when these figures were laid before it, M.P.s have nonetheless been taking backstage advice about suits (medium gray is recommended), shirts (nothing stripy), and ties (nothing too flash, nothing too dark). Whatever the long-term advantages of MPTV to the electorate, there's no doubt that the first beneficiaries have been the dry cleaners and tie salesmen in the Westminster area. Balder Members of Parliament were even offered a free issue of *papier poudré* to diminish excess glare on the glistening pate; but cranial cover jobs

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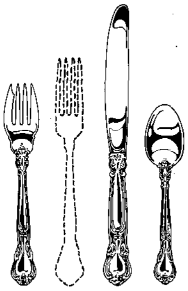
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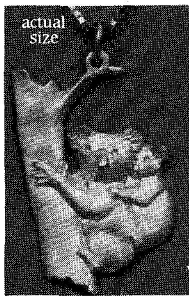
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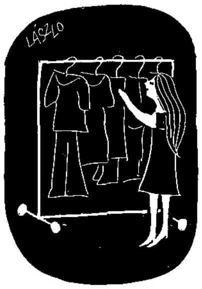
seemingly have yet to find favor.

So far, MPTV has proved a modest, uncontentious success, even if Prime Minister's Question Time is unlikely to offer a ratings challenge to "The Oprah Winfrey Show," against which it is set. Nor has the fear of bad behavior come to anything (though it has yet to be tested by a Cabinet crisis or the run-up to a general election). Conservatives occasionally bellow "This is London, not Bucharest!" at the Labour benches, and Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition responds with cries of "Sleaze government! Sleaze government!" But these are no more than routine diplomatic niceties. The main focus of interest in the opening months has been on the front-bench exchanges between Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. Kinnock. When coverage began, the Labour Party had more to gain than the Tories did: for a start, television would show the Opposition properly at work (instead of merely debating in a studio); the two party leaders, each standing at his (or her) own dispatch box and backed by his (or her) own team, would be displayed with some sort of useful parity; and Mrs. Thatcher might prove vulnerable when she was unable to control the rules of engagement in advance.

Yet it may be that the Prime Minister has benefitted more than the Opposition. The longer her reign has gone on, the juicier have become the rumors. She's quite mad, people will assure you: paranoid; a megalomaniac; actually, it's hormone-replacement therapy that's done it—makes her think she can go on forever. When it became known last year that the Prime Minister every so often visits a nonmedical practitioner in West London and receives tiny electric shocks while sitting in a bath of warm water, this less than Churchillian behavior struck even some of her supporters as a bit quaint. But such whispers probably worked to her advantage: she only had to appear half normal on Prime Minister's Question Time to seem reassuringly in control.

In fact, everyone agrees that she has cannily altered her act for the TV camera. "We thought it would reveal Mrs. Thatcher as shrill and authoritarian," Giles Radice laments. "But she's avoided that problem. She's totally changed her style. She used to roar like a lion, now she coos like a dove." David Dimbleby, about the only political interviewer on British television who doesn't approach the Prime Minister on all fours while loosening the collar to allow easier entry of the stiletto heel between the neck vertebrae, recalls, "She used to stand with her hands on her hips and bawl at the Opposition like a fishwife." Now she has "completely changed her tone." But even in this modified version, softened for television, her act remains a compelling one, as forceful as it is eccentric. She stands rather stiffly at the dispatch box, with swept-back hair, firm features, and an increasingly generous embonpoint thrusting at her tailored suit of Tory blue or emerald green; there, butting into the spray and storm of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, she resembles the figurehead on the prow of some antique sailing ship, emblematic as much as decorative. She now sports a large pair of spectacles, which she often holds by the sidepiece while reading an answer, before whipping them off to give the Labour benches a basilisk stare. She has never been a great debater or a great emoter, but she remains a great presence. Just as in Alfred Jarry's play "Ubu Roi" a single performer is sometimes called upon to represent The Entire Russian Army, Mrs. Thatcher seems aware that she is acting The Entire Conservative Party. And it is part of this role and condition that occasionally one has to peer over the parapet and listen to the distant catcalls of those misfortunates who for some peculiar reason have banded themselves into parties that are not conservative.



At Prime Minister's Question Time the day after the first Vietnamese boat people in Hong Kong were sent back to Hanoi in the middle of the night, Mr. Kinnock launched a two-question attack that deliberately sought comparison with the forcible repatriation by the British in 1945 of cossacks who then went to their deaths at the hands of Stalin. (The matter was fresh again in the memory after the historian Count Tolstoy and a small publisher had the record sum of one and a half million pounds in libel damages awarded against them for alleging "war crimes" against Lord Aldington, an officer in the Balkans who later rose to become the deputy chairman of the Conservative Party.) Was it not the case, Mr. Kinnock asked, that the Prime Minister in the present instance was the only person who couldn't say she was "just obeying orders" in the matter of repatriating the Vietnamese—for the very reason that she herself was "the one giving the orders"? But The Entire Conservative Party did not deign to rise even to this implied smear of "war crimes." "The Right Honourable Gentleman's remarks," she replied majestically, "are feeble and nonsense." *Feeble and nonsense:* neither the lack of subtlety nor the lack of grammar will probably do her any harm with the electorate. If the House of Commons, with its incessant background noise, its schoolboy rowdiness, its dominant maleness, and its low level of repartee, often resembles nothing so much as the canteen in a minor public school, then Mrs. Thatcher is cast as Matron. She is the one who supervises the dinners, and hands out the cod-liver oil; when Kinnock Minor accuses her of the worst crimes under the sun, she merely frowns slightly, as if he were making yet another complaint about the quality of her custard. For she has seen generations of boys come and go, some well groomed and courteous, others rough and uppity, and she knows that all of them, in the long run, will look back fondly on her legendary strictness. She is also familiar with the work of Mr. Hilaire Belloc, and knows that others, too, remember the couplet

> And always keep a hold of Nurse
> For fear of finding something worse.

IT was fitting that MPTV started up at the same time that London's more traditional theatres gave themselves over to the winter pantomime season. Both these venerable entertainment genres attract sentimental homage; both regularly fall back on the oldest of plots, while intermittently updating their personnel; both are prone to infantilism. But, whereas the Mother of Parliaments can to some extent boast of its exportability, the pantomime remains something stubbornly local. The British have managed to export some surprising things—cricket, marmalade, the humor of Benny Hill—but they have never succeeded in unloading the New Year pantomime on anyone else.

The panto has its historical roots in

the harlequinade and was cross-fertilized by the Victorian music hall. In essence, it consists of a fairy tale—the story of Cinderella, Mother Goose, Aladdin, Dick Whittington—that, while drawing on a traditional narrative line, is constantly updated by topical references, often of a satirical nature. Its central modes are farce and melodrama, with large openings for the miraculous and the sentimental; it aims itself simultaneously at small children, who follow its twists with an awesome directness of response, and at their accompanying parents, who are wooed by coarse double-entendres supposedly above the heads of their offspring. It includes two elements with powerful appeal to the British: cross-dressing (the principal boy is always played by a girl, and the Pantomime Dame by a middle-aged man) and comic animals (who aren't played by themselves, either). It retains, if in an attenuated form, a world view in which Britannia rules the waves, and foreigners are a humorous supporting act. Finally, it boasts a promiscuous permeability to modern culture, so that at any moment the stage is likely to be invaded by some two-minute television cult that the parents have barely caught on to. Darth Vader outfits jostle with TV magicians, old Empire racism with Green jokes, and all is resolved with much audience participation and a join-in-or-die singsong. Perhaps, on reflection, it isn't too surprising that the panto hasn't caught on in other countries.

It has always been a ramshackle, catchall, demotic genre. Parents returning to their first panto since they themselves were kids are apt to bemoan the debasement of this popular old British art form, but the truth is that it has always been debased—that is to say, various, eclectic, vulgar, referential, and topical. Whether one panto is actually "better" than any other is almost impossible for an adult eye to judge. Perhaps more to the point is that the pantomime is usually a child's first introduction to the theatre, and that the allure of the tiered darkness, velvet curtains, and interval ice cream seems undiminished and undiminishable. Amazingly, the pantomime doesn't put kids off the theatre for life.

This year, the pantos have ranged even more widely than usual. There have been modern pantos, retro pantos, Green pantos, even (perhaps not surprising, given the strand of sexual ambiguity in the genre) a lesbian panto ("The Snow Queen: A Fairy Tale for Christmas"). In terms of personnel, the genre has always drawn on a wide mix of performers: superannuated pop stars, TV comedians, young hopefuls, middle-ranking faces who were once young hopefuls, end-of-the-pier old-stagers brought out of semi-retirement to "tread the boards" annually for a six-week run and bore the new young hopefuls about the romance of greasepaint, plus a raggle-taggle of outsiders who are celebrated enough in their own fields to make the transition to theatre despite an alarming lack of thespian aptitude. This last category reflects the nature of modern fame, and is itself a form of cross-dressing: if you are acclaimed in one area, then you are accepted as a valued guest in another area, where you have no natural business. For instance, this year there were three television newsreaders appearing in panto, in London, Stevenage, and Torquay. Russell Grant, a spherical TV astrologer made famous by breakfast TV, fun sweaters, and a hospitable campiness, starred in "Robinson Crusoe" in Cardiff. Eddie Kidd, a motorbike stuntman who has leapt over dozens of London buses and broken almost as many limbs in the process, was in "Dick Whittington" at Deptford. But the real novelties this season were the "pugilistic pantos." In Reading, you could see Barry McGuigan, a former featherweight world champion, make his theatrical début in "Snow White"—while Snow White herself, with an ironical deftness rare to panto, was played by one of the nation's best-loved topless models, Linda Lusardi. In London, the hottest ticket, "Aladdin," also featured a boxer, the former British heavyweight titleholder Frank Bruno.

KEY

This is the rain that falls heavy with particulates
into the sour soil, the dotted lines.
The empty barns and the cellar holes appear in bold.
Here is the house he broke a window through the bricks
in, so she would see the road, the color of flame.
Here are the years she sat there, clay.

This is the depression, black and pupilless,
that blew out the bridge to the next town.
Here are those she did not see, climbing the hill,
descending it, stopping at the creek, picking out
faces in the swollen bed, turning to renegotiate
her dreams, vermillion.

These are the gray birch, the white pine, the volunteers
that fill the fields the ledge was cleared from
to build the long, low walls.
These are the bottles, green, that choke the well;
here the expression of the letters on their stones:
OBIDIAH, LEANDER, EZEKIEL.

—Revan Schendler

• •

Bruno, the first black champion here, is very civil and very popular. He is an excellent example of the traditional British veneration for the good loser—the "plucky little Belgium" syndrome in the national psyche. For many decades, the country has not had a boxer capable of winning the world heavyweight title, but the manner in which local champions are dispatched by American titleholders is always carefully scrutinized. Henry Cooper once put Cassius Clay (as he then was) on the canvas with a left hook, and for buttoning The Lip, if briefly, Cooper has remained a national hero ever since, advertising Brut toiletries and appearing in countless TV game shows and pro-celebrity golf tournaments. Joe Bugner, who took the British title from Cooper on a disputed points decision, was so unpopular after his victory that he eventually departed to Australia (where he has taken up discus-throwing and recently failed to make the Australian team for the Commonwealth Games). Bruno is the most personable champ since Cooper, and the manner of his inevitable defeat last year by Mike Tyson endeared him to the nation with a solidity that only a charge of child molestation could conceivably budge. He stayed upright for several rounds, hit Tyson with one punch that we are practically sure almost hurt the American champion, and didn't disgrace the flag. Plucky big Frank! His salability as a TV commodity was greatly enhanced; he landed a six-week run in "Aladdin" at the Dominion Theatre, Tottenham Court Road; and in the New Year Honours List he was awarded an M.B.E. by the Queen.

At the Dominion Theatre, Bruno plays the Genie of the Lamp, whose main task is to materialize whenever Aladdin rubs the magic lamp and seeks assistance. Bruno was never exactly twinkle-toed in the ring, and his Genie is a less than impish conception. When he is required to dance, he watches his feet lest they do something wrong; when he is required to spar, he watches his hands lest they forget themselves and do something right. He is dogged, wooden, and touchingly word-perfect, pushing out the words in the same way he pushed out the left jabs—schooled rather than natural. But this awkwardness makes him, if anything, even more popular with the audience, and as he stands there, in a costume half out of the boxing ring and half out of "Dynasty" (ankle boots and whopping shoulders), the former heavyweight champion doesn't look particularly incongruous.

"Aladdin," the tale of the younger son of a Chinese laundrywoman and his love for the Emperor's daughter, turns out to have an appropriately yuppie message for our times: all you have to do is rub a magic lamp (make the right deal, buy the clever futures) and you'll get your heart's desire of goods, services, and love. It has one archetypally Freudian moment, when the virginal boy Aladdin (played by a virginally pretty girl in very short skirts) is being tempted by the wicked Abanazer to visit the Dark Cave, where all the Secret Treasure is stored. "Shall I go in, children?" this innocent yet desirable boy-girl juve lead winsomely asks of his/her prepubescent audience. "Nooo!" they bellow back, most pleadingly. But in she goes, into the Dark Cave of the Secret Treasure, and wise old heads in the audience nod knowingly.

Mainly, however, the show consists of a series of quick-change acts designed to juggle the disparate interests of the audience: distract the kids, placate the mums, titillate the dads. Characters arrive by motorbike or fly past unsteadily on wires; a "Chinese" chorus line (a strange concept anyway, given the presumed prudery of that nation) flashes its satin knickers; a TV magician with no perceptible plot function pops up to do a series of tricks, then yields to Dooby Duck and His Friends, a collection of foot-high string-puppet animals who dance to disco music—an act somewhat lost on a grownup stage. Nor should we forget the Chinese Policemen, fearsome enforcers of the Emperor's commands. In this version, they are played by the Roly Polys, a variety act consisting of half a dozen fat ladies aged roughly between thirty and fifty, who pander to the idea that female corpulence is intrinsically risible. Naturally plumpish, they are padded and costumed into grossness, and, in one of the stranger bits of transnational transvestism, play the Chinese Policemen as Victorian bobbies. They sing and dance in an approximate way—no doubt part of their charm—and in the celebration of the wedding feast for Aladdin and his Princess the Roly Polys troop on and perform "Anything Goes." In panto, truly it does.

STILL, for grotesque comedy with which to bring in the nineties the professional stage had to yield, and not for the first time, to the House of Commons. When MPTV began, newspapers ran features on "The MPs to Watch," but none of them picked out the clown who was to enliven the New Year with a good, old-fashioned, upstaging extracurricular-sex court case. Ron Brown, Labour M.P. for Edinburgh Leith, is a forty-nine-year-old bouffant-haired left-winger ritually described as a "maverick"—that term which Parliamentary commentators reserve for those who are potty but interesting, loopy but semi-lovable, and seriously unfit for higher office. There are more such characters nowadays on the Labour benches than on the Conservative ones. Labour cherishes them for their colorfulness, their smack of nonconformity, their ability to discomfit, and their reminder that the Labour Party is, after all, a broad church. The Tories also cherish these loose cannons

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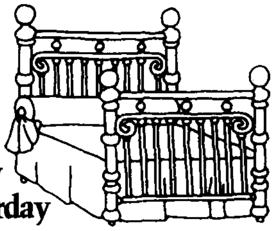

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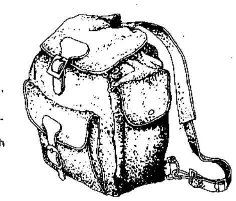

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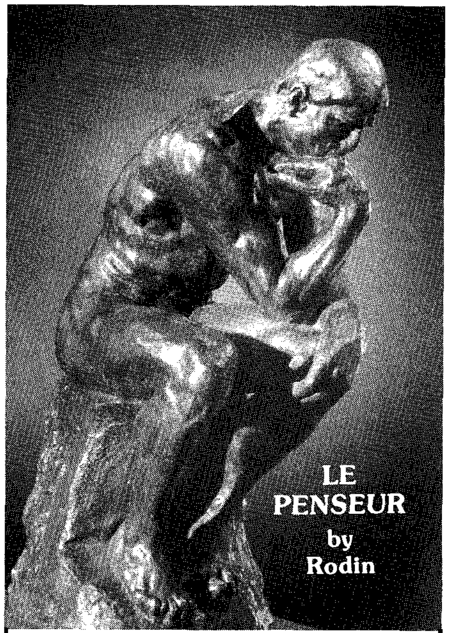

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of the Opposition, for their ability to embarrass their own leadership, for their regular and pungent proof that the whole Labour Party is deeply irresponsible.

Ron Brown was elected to Parliament in 1979. Two years later, he was banned from the Commons for five days after calling a Tory M.P. a liar; more recently, he was banned again, after seizing the Mace during a debate and denting it. (His repair bill came to almost twelve hundred pounds.) When he was arrested in Glasgow while protesting against a visit to the city by Mrs. Thatcher, it apparently took the police some time to become convinced that he could possibly be an M.P., as he claimed. (Fine: fifty pounds.) But his two most tabloid-stirring exploits hitherto had been a mission to Colonel Qaddafi, in Libya, and an all-expenses-paid visit to the Soviet-backed government in Afghanistan: photos of the M.P. posing beside a Soviet tank were much enjoyed by the Tories, and caused him to be satirically known in the House for some time thereafter as Brown of Kandahar. Such trips were enthusiastically denounced at the time, though recent events have confirmed that the problem of finding friends in a changing political world isn't confined to mavericks. In 1978, for instance, President Ceausescu and his wife came on a state visit to Britain at a time when Romania was seen as the dissident in the Soviet bloc. My enemy's enemy is my friend, and Ceausescu was awarded an honorary knighthood by the Queen. (This comparatively rare honor is given to much favored non-natives: recipients have included Bob Geldof, Ronald Reagan, Caspar Weinberger, and Magnus Magnusson, the Icelandic TV star.) But then, after Gorbachev, Romania changed its status from Plucky Bulwark Against Soviet Imperialism to Filthy Little Balkan Dictatorship. (It was always both, of course, but countries rarely attain a complex, dual labelling in the eyes of others.) And in the brief hiatus between Ceausescu's fall and his execution the Queen managed to strip the Romanian leader of his embarrassing knighthood.

Ron Brown, as his recent legal entanglement disclosed, is a flouter of even more traditions than had been supposed. Over the last thirty years or so, it has become almost a Parliamentary rule that disgrace visits the two main parties in different ways. Tories are busted for sex, and Labourites are busted for graft. This doesn't mean that Labour M.P.s are tight-buttoned spouses and Tories financially impeccable, but merely that they are discreet —or wily—in different areas of life. With Ron Brown, though, it was sex, and the erotic angle insured that the imbroglio which came to court in Lewes, Sussex, became known as the Case of Nonna's Knickers.

For three years, Mr. Brown had his life well worked out. He kept his wife and his constituency in Scotland, his mistress and his Commons seat in England. Nonna Longden, the woman in the case, even managed to accompany him, as his "secretary," on the visit to Colonel Qaddafi. There was the occasional hiccup—like a report in the tabloid press that Ron and Nonna had had sex in a shower within the precincts of the House of Commons—but nothing too unusual, nothing that wasn't deniable. When the couple broke up, however, Mrs. Longden took a new lover—one Dermot Redmond, a carpet salesman in a tweed deerstalker—who happened to have a criminal record as a con man, and things got livelier. One day, Brown visited Nonna's apartment, near Hastings, and here versions of what happened differ. According to the prosecution, the M.P., in a state of inebriation and jealousy, went berserk, and smashed all the windows in the flat with a bottle of Liebfraumilch; when the quailing Nonna summoned Dermot the carpet salesman for assistance, the M.P. stole a tape recorder, two pairs of knickers, a photograph of Mrs. Longden, a gold bar brooch, and a pair of china earrings, then decamped. According to the defense, Mr. Brown was merely having a quiet drink with Mrs. Longden when the carpet salesman erupted into the household, and it was *his* jealous rage that caused all the damage to the apartment. Moreover, the M.P. had no intention of permanently depriving Nonna of her valuables; he had taken them merely as bargaining counters against the return of some "politically sensitive" tapes in her possession—over which, incidentally, she was trying to blackmail him for twenty thousand pounds. As for the two pairs of knickers, it was Mrs. Longden herself who, ironically, had wrapped them round the tape recorder, and that explained their presence in the M.P.'s pocket when he was arrested by police at the local railway station.

The Case of Nonna's Knickers enlivened the Crown Court at Lewes (and the surrounding Tory constituency) for a week. The bottle of Liebfraumilch, with a plume of grass waving from its neck, was displayed to the jury; so were the two pairs of knickers (one white and one black, for the record). Mrs. Ron Brown sat in court all week "silently supporting her husband"—or perhaps silently cursing his very name. Mr. Brown himself declined to take the witness stand, a decision from which nothing may be legally inferred but from which observers can usually infer plenty—in the present case, the probable view of the M.P.'s lawyers that if their client were allowed to get up on his hind legs he would make a spectacular ass of himself and be eaten alive by the prosecution. The jury was faced with two separate charges and two wildly differing accounts of reality. Sagely, it split the difference: the M.P. was found not guilty of theft but guilty of criminal damage. (Fine: a thousand pounds. Compensation: six hundred and twenty-eight pounds. Contribution to prosecution costs: twenty-five hundred pounds.) Judge John Gower, Q.C., said, "I'm almost afraid to mention the words 'ladies' knickers,' because they have assumed a significance out of all proportion to their rightful place in this case." Mrs. Ron Brown said, "My marriage is as good today as twenty-seven years ago," and declared herself unsurprised by her husband's behavior, "knowing men and having lived with one for twenty-seven years." Ron Brown himself, on being asked whether he was considering resignation, said, "No, why should I?"

Why should he? It's well known that a drunk-driving conviction does not diminish a judge's authority in the courts, though quite what degree of criminality is acceptable among those who construct and administer Britain's laws has never been officially laid down. In the present instance, the wise heads who weigh such matters tended to agree—theoretically, at least—with Mr. Brown. Had he been convicted of theft, he would have had to resign, but conviction for the lesser offense of wielding a bottle of Liebfraumilch in

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such a way as to commit *damage passionel* did not in itself diminish an M.P.'s ability to represent his constituents and adorn his party. However, there is the manner as well as the matter of conviction to consider, and here Mr. Brown yet again did not behave in the accepted way. An M.P. emerging from court in his position is expected to say that the experience has been a deeply chastening one, and that he has sworn off booze and mistresses for life and will humbly serve his constituents in whatever capacity they determine, be it only stamp-licker and envelope-sealer. Mr. Brown, however, was in triumphalist mood. What did he think of the verdict? "It's a moral victory," he bullishly declared. The gentlemen of Fleet Street, who had done well out of the story, presented the M.P. with a bottle of champagne. Mr. Brown shook it vigorously and showered the contents all over himself and Mrs. Brown. In this celebratory pose did the guilty M.P. bedeck the front pages next morning.

You are allowed to be a maverick; you are allowed even to be a minor criminal. But as an M.P. you are not allowed to be a cringe-making clown and a relentless embarrassment. You are not expected to load the gun and press it into the opponent's hands. Sir Anthony Meyer has just discovered this: having impudently challenged Mrs. Thatcher for the leadership, he has now been "deselected" (the current political euphemism for "sacked") by his constituency party, and will be put out to grass at the next election. And, on the other side of the House, Mr. Brown finds that his local party has denounced him, Neil Kinnock is after his blood, and nobody wants to hear his pathetic plea that the celebratory champagne was, in fact, mere sparkling wine. His chances of representing Edinburgh Leith at the next election are officially estimated at zero. However, given the nature of notoriety, there will always be a place for Ron Brown. The Rector of Stiffkey, who in a famous prewar morals case was dispossessed of his benefice, ended his days exhibiting himself in a lion's cage. (The resident lion, drawing on distant Roman memories, finally ate the Christian.) Mr. Brown might not have to go to such lengths as this; but he could do worse than start auditioning right now for the part of Mother Goose.

—JULIAN BARNES

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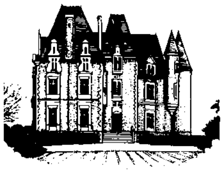

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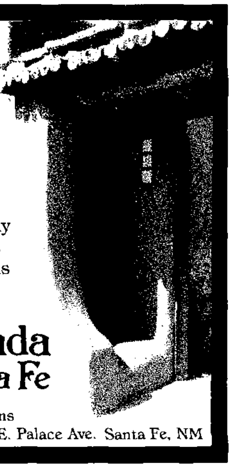

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BOOKS

The Smiling Pope

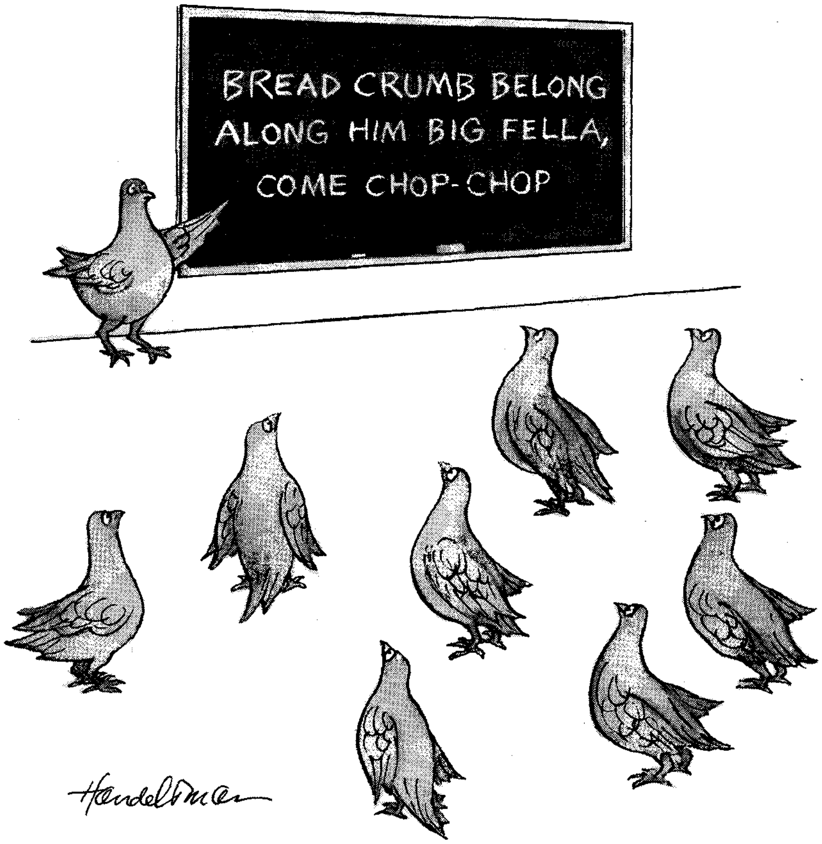
WHEN Pope John Paul I, né Albino Luciani, died unexpectedly, on September 28, 1978, he had served as pontiff for only thirty-three days. To most of the world he was still a shadowy figure, but in Italy he had already won popular approval for what was perceived as his simplicity, his holy ways, and his common touch. People were struck by the attention he paid to children during the papal audiences, and called him, affectionately, "the smiling Pope." He was sixty-five years old when he died, and was supposed to have been in excellent health.

John Paul died alone. He was found early in the morning, sitting up in bed and wearing his glasses. There was no sign of a painful struggle. He looked peaceful. But the simplicity that set the tone of his life was notably absent from the drama of his death. In fact, the descriptions of the circumstances surrounding his death which came from official Vatican sources and members of the papal staff contradicted each other on so many crucial points—including the time of his demise, the identity of the person who found his body, and the question of whether or not the papal morticians had been summoned before the body was officially found—that foul play was widely suspected.

Quite apart from the realities of the event, the idea of papal intrigue has probably been encoded into Italian genes. Thus, within days, rumors that provided plausible motives for killing the Pope proliferated. Powerful factions had plotted against John Paul, it was said, because it was suspected that he had been on the verge of cleaning up the Vatican bank (which had been tarnished by its involvement in the Banco Ambrosiano scandal), or that he had been about to demote important members of the Curia, or that he had been about to revise Humanae Vitae, the conservative encyclical on birth control issued by his immediate predecessor, Paul VI. The rumors, coupled with the inconsistencies surrounding John Paul's death, soon developed into a full-blown scandal.

Popes have been murdered before. At one time, according to John Cornwell, a British journalist who has written a lively investigative account of the Pope's death called "A Thief in the Night: The Mysterious Death of Pope John Paul I" (Simon & Schuster; $21.95), it was a fairly common practice. The first pontiff known to have been poisoned was John VIII, who died in 882. He succumbed after being clubbed to death by members of his inner circle, who discovered that the poison they had given him wasn't working fast enough. (A few years later, the corpse of Pope Formosus was disentombed by a successor, mutilated, and thrown into the Tiber.) In the tenth century, Pope John X was allegedly murdered by the infamous Marozia, the tyrannical ruler of Rome; Benedict VI was strangled to death in a dungeon; and his successor, the Antipope Boniface VII, was assassinated less than a year after taking office, and his body was dragged through the streets. In 1471, Paul II died after supposedly eating two poisoned melons, and poison was also suspected in the torturous death in 1503 of Alexander VI, the much detested Borgia Pope.

In the decade that followed the death of John Paul, conspiracy theories abounded. According to some of them, John Paul was a liberal, who had been murdered at the behest of a cabal of conservative bishops; according to others, he was a reactionary, who had been eliminated by liberals and Freemasons within the Vatican. Cornwell discusses four books about the subject which came out in the early nineteen-eighties: "La Vraie Mort de Jean-Paul I^er^," by Jean-Jacques Thierry; "Pontiff," by Max Morgan-Witts and Gordon Thomas; "La Soutane Rouge," by Roger Peyrefitte; and "In God's Name," by David Yallop. "La Vraie Mort de Jean-Paul I^er^" accuses John Paul's Secretary of State, Cardinal Jean Villot, of plotting to murder the Pope after learning that the Vatican had become a hotbed of Freemasonry. In "Pontiff" the authors theorize that the assassination rumors were started by the K.G.B., as part of a plot to discredit the Vatican. In "La Soutane Rouge," a roman à clef, John Paul, portrayed as an idealistic liberal determined to root out corruption, runs afoul not only of the K.G.B. but also of the Mafia, a host of crooked financiers,



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and members of a Masonic lodge. The book is closely based on the Banco Ambrosiano scandal, in which well over a billion dollars was lent to shell companies—some of them owned by the Vatican bank—which then funnelled the money back to associates of Banco Ambrosiano's director, Roberto Calvi. Most of Peyrefitte's characters are barely disguised counterparts of the principals in the scandal, among them Calvi, who was found hanged under Blackfriars Bridge, in London, in June, 1982; his friend the Sicilian financier and onetime Vatican adviser Michele Sindona, who was found poisoned in jail in March, 1986; and Archbishop Paul Marcinkus, the rough-speaking, golf-loving, American-born head of the Vatican bank, whose somewhat hazily defined links with Calvi eventually prompted the Vatican to pay the Banco Ambrosiano's creditors two hundred and fifty million dollars. (Marcinkus was recently removed from office.) The same cast resurfaced in "In God's Name," a best-selling account of these events. Yallop wrote that he was "totally convinced that Albino Luciani was murdered," and his depiction of John Paul as a courageous reformer who falls prey to the evil schemes of corrupt bishops is probably the one that has stuck longest in the public consciousness. Since all four books raised a host of unanswered questions, the circumstances of John Paul's death remained clouded, and the Vatican apparently found the persistent rumors vexing. Through its press office, the Vatican encouraged Cornwell, who happened to be in Rome working on another project, to conduct a searching investigation of the matter and write about it. He was promised the Vatican's full coöperation, noninterference, and a privileged look into its inner sanctums—an offer that Cornwell, who is both a lapsed Catholic and a former seminarian, apparently found irresistible.

Virulent Italian Vatican-bashers, who over the years seem to have developed a profound distrust of Archbishop Marcinkus, will be disappointed by Cornwell's conclusions; the evidence he uncovers points to the Archbishop's innocence in the affair. Despite Marcinkus's shady dealings with Calvi et al., and his general Chicago-ward-heeler manner (which, as Cornwell points out, nicely conceals seven years of training in philosophy and theology, a doctorate in law, and diplomatic studies at the Pontifical Academy), the only evidence implicating him in the Pope's death turns out to have been based on misinformation. At one point in Yallop's book, the reader is led to believe that a Swiss Guard named Hans Roggen saw Marcinkus near the entrance to the Vatican at an uncharacteristically early hour on the morning that the Pope's body was found. Later in the book, Yallop says that he interviewed Roggen. But Roggen told Cornwell that he had never met Yallop, that he had been interviewed by a researcher, and that his version of events had not been accurately reported. According to Roggen, and everyone else familiar with Marcinkus's schedule, the Archbishop was a habitual early riser and was on his way to his office when he learned of the Pope's death.

Cornwell's intimate knowledge of Catholicism and the Catholic bureaucracy adds richness and depth to his investigation, though it certainly makes it less neutral than he would have us believe it is, as is evident at the outset from his reaction to a certain epicene cleric, who agrees to be interviewed on the condition that he is granted anonymity. Here is Cornwell's description of the man, whom he dubs Monsignor Sottovoce: his face is "puce and puffy, with a bloom of silky plumpness"; his voice is "high, nasal and monotone"; his eyes are a "vacuous bright blue"; and his hair is "cut in a choir-boy style with a fussy quiff." Monsignor Sottovoce characterizes the Vatican as "a palace of gossipy eunuchs" that "floats on a sea of brilliant bitchery"—a description that Cornwell obviously finds distasteful but comes to more or less agree with. The Vatican's assurances of full disclosure notwithstanding, Cornwell keeps running into evasions—frustratingly presented in "reverent, well-modulated, homiletic tones"—and "amphibology," a Jesuitical term that one young priest defines variously as "a statement with several meanings" and semi-truths masquerading as full disclosures (in other words, white lies). But Cornwell is a good sleuth, and fairly soon he discovers that many of the public's perceptions of the Pope and of the circumstances of his death are inaccurate. For one thing, John Paul

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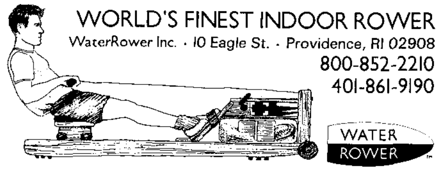

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probably did not die of a heart attack, as the papal doctor stated categorically, but from a pulmonary embolism. The current Vatican press officer, a medical doctor, thinks that a misdiagnosis was made. John Paul, he says, suffered an embolism in his eye in 1975 and, contrary to popular belief, was a sick man, with circulatory problems—his ankles were so swollen that it was often difficult for him to walk. An emergency button near his bed had never been pressed, and several other people the author talks to think that this supports the embolism theory, since embolisms come suddenly, without warning. It must, however, remain a theory, since an autopsy was not performed.

At the conclave of cardinals following the death of Pope Paul VI, Albino Luciani was elected Pope in one day, on the fourth vote. It was the shortest conclave in this century. Nonetheless, according to virtually everyone the author interviewed, the Christian principles cited at the conclave as good reasons to elect him proved to be inadequate guidelines for the demanding, exhausting papal role. In fact, the new Pope was ill equipped and unprepared for the job. Those who admired him describe him as holy but unsophisticated. The less charitable say he should never have been chosen. In the latter category is Monsignor Sottovoce, who ventures that "the Holy Spirit did a good job there, relieving us before he did too much damage." Archbishop Marcinkus compares John Paul unfavorably with Paul VI, who "knew the Curia inside out" and, from the Archbishop's point of view, was a model of sophistication and managerial know-how. He believes that John Paul's lack of experience in this regard caused him to panic: "This poor man . . . comes out from Venice; it's a small, aging diocese, ninety thousand people in the city, old priests. Then all of a sudden he's thrown into a place and he doesn't even know where the offices *are*. He doesn't know what the Secretary of State *does*. . . . They call him the 'smiling Pope.' . . . But let me tell you something . . . that was a very *nervous* smile."

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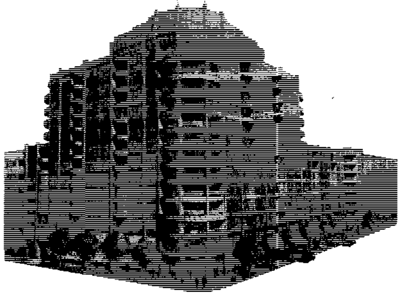

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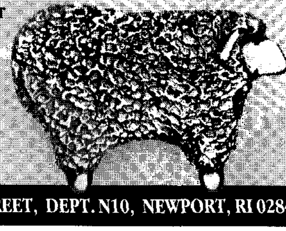
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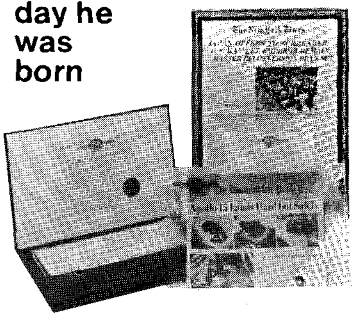

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the saying of the Mass in Latin, and when Headquarters gets word that a group of rebellious monks off the coast of Ireland are defying this order, it dispatches an emissary to bring them into line. By the late nineteen-seventies, the liberal bloom of Pope John XXIII's papacy was already off the rose, but Moore's fantasy of a bureaucratically modernized Holy See had become something of a reality. John Paul felt himself to be an inadequate Pope because he knew himself to be a poor bureaucrat. Piety and simplicity were the wrong tools for the job he had been asked to fill, and, sadly, no one was more aware of his incapacities than he. "Look, Sister," he is reported to have said to his aged housekeeper, Sister Vincenza, "I should not be sitting here in this seat. The Foreign Pope"—a prescient and apparently oft-repeated allusion to the present pontiff, who sat across from Luciani at the conclave—"is coming to take my place. I have *begged* Our Lord." Cornwell establishes after a while that it was beyond a doubt Sister Vincenza who found the Pope's body. The Vatican spokesmen, resorting to "amphibology," said that a male secretary had found him, because they thought that scandal might ensue if they said it was a woman.

The two clerics who saw more of John Paul I than anyone else were his private secretaries, John Magee and Don Diego Lorenzi. Magee, now a bishop in Ireland, tells Cornwell that John Paul not only was overworked but also suffered from lack of privacy. As is the custom, the new Pope was given valets from his region—in Luciani's case, the Veneto. But his valets, the Gusso brothers, "took over the papal household in an unprecedented way," Magee says. "They would come in and photograph the Pope's private study, photograph the bedroom. They were everywhere and running everything; they were in the chapel, serving at table. . . . They completely took over. The Pope did not feel free." The avalanche of paperwork brought to him each day, much of it by Cardinal Villot, who was thinking of retiring soon and was anxious to clear his desk, also distressed him greatly. Cardinal Villot died not long after the Pope—convinced, apparently, that he had "destroyed" John Paul by overburdening him.

Cornwell travelled to Milan to interview Don Diego Lorenzi, to Newark to interview a former F.B.I. agent familiar with Marcinkus's history, and back to Rome to talk with the papal morticians (two figures out of commedia dell'arte) and scores of Vatican officials. The more he learned, the less probable the conspiracy theories looked. Father Lorenzi, whom Magee and others accuse of having disappeared mysteriously for many hours the night the Pope died, does not really account very well for his whereabouts that night, but he seems merely feckless; the F.B.I. man, while not denying Marcinkus's involvement in the Banco Ambrosiano scandal, believes that the Archbishop has been the victim of an overbroad slander campaign; the papal morticians, according to the Vatican log, were summoned at five-fifteen in the afternoon, nearly twelve hours after the Pope's body was found; and most of the other inconsistencies in the case seem to have been the result of ineptitude, misunderstanding, or the self-serving mendaciousness of the papal circle.

How anyone could have mistaken this Pope for a liberal is a mystery. Although his father was a Socialist, Albino Luciani separated himself from leftist Church policies and announced during the 1975 election that Christianity was incompatible with Communism (a view belied by millions of his Communist- and Socialist-voting, churchgoing fellow-countrymen). He defended Humanae Vitae's condemnation of birth control, and he was the first Italian clerical official to publicly oppose in-vitro fertilization. As the patriarch of Venice, he liked to have long talks with his parishioners, to visit with his family and bask in its warmth, and to write occasional whimsical letters to fictional or historical persons (Pinocchio and Sir Walter Scott, for example).

There is some evidence that for the briefest of moments John Paul thought he could rule as pontiff in his own way—he announced shortly after he had been elected that he would forgo the traditional pomp of the papal coronation, that he did not wish to be carried in the gestatorial chair, and that he wanted to be called "pastor" rather than "pontiff" of the Church—but this illusion did not last long. Within days, he began to feel overwhelmed and to tell anyone who would listen that he hoped he would soon be relieved of his burden. He *wanted* to die. On three occasions, he prevailed upon Father Magee to allow him to serve as altar boy while Magee said Mass. Cornwell believes that this humbling of himself demonstrates John Paul's need for "abasement" and "humiliation." It is likelier, I think, that he may have needed to reënact the simple religious expressions of his happily inconsequential youth, when it was enough to be a mere servant of Christ. There *was* something almost childlike about him. When some important papers blew out of the papal roof garden one afternoon, he became completely distraught and moaned, "*O Dio mio, Dio mio! Cos' ho fatto?*" His worst fear, Magee tells Cornwell, was that he would be caught bumbling. It seems never to have occurred to John Paul simply to ask the College of Cardinals to allow him to resign, as Celestine V, who had a similar repugnance to governing, did in 1294.

The Pope's niece, a young doctor named Lina Petri, believes that, even without the will to live, her uncle would still be alive if his staff had been less preoccupied by their own interests and more alert to his needs. She points out that the doctor whose care he had been under for years was in Venice, and that although John Paul "really needed a great deal of attention" the papal physician had never visited him. It comes as no great surprise when we learn that John Paul refused to summon medical help, even though he is reported to have had severe chest pains on the day of his death. Such behavior would have been compatible with his over-all feelings of hopelessness and his stated death wish, but it seems plain that those around him, who were aware that he was in extremely bad health, acted irresponsibly by permitting him to be, as his niece suggests, "a Pope without a doctor." In a shamefaced sort of way, John Paul seems also to have isolated himself from the help of family, friends, or anyone else who might have ameliorated his feeling of disorientation or perhaps given him some practical advice. But how unbelievable that in all the vastness of the Holy See no one seems to have taken pity on him, or somehow reached out to him out of common kindness. After hastily electing a "pastoral" pontiff, the Vatican bureaucracy seems

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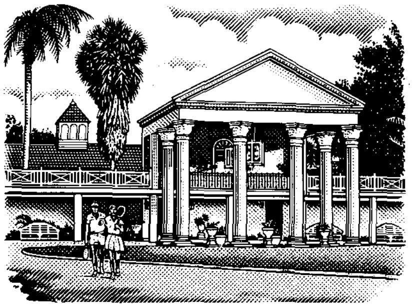

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to have just as hastily given up on him—ironically, because he embodied the very qualities that supposedly made his candidacy so attractive. In the end, Cornwell's answer to the question of how the head of the largest Christian community in the world could die absolutely alone, without even receiving the last rites, is less dramatic than the conspiracy theories but far sadder. John Paul was the opposite of a despot, but the tyranny of power often seems to isolate equally the good and the bad. The Pope, Cornwell concludes, "died of neglect" and "lack of love."

—Lis Harris

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

A Tenured Professor, by John Kenneth Galbraith (Houghton Mifflin; $19.95). Mr. Galbraith's painful cautionary novel stands "Candide" impressively on its head, and assures us, through the wisdom of its hero, a young Harvard professor of economics, that our nation is ruled by a hysterical aversion to good sense, and that one can make a fortune by recognizing this. He comes up with a formula called the Index of Irrational Expectations (IRAT): when, for example, the stock market is soaring, one indexes the most irrationally popular stocks and sells them short, and when the inevitable "correction" occurs one seeks out the most irrationally despised stocks for a bargain buy. In contemporary America, of course, where only honest profit-taking is suspect, this attitude is considered unpatriotic, and our hero, as might be supposed, pays a price for his rationality.

The Quincunx, by Charles Palliser (Ballantine; $25). Whatever this tome lacks in the way of lifelikeness it makes up in plot, plot, and more plot. A pseudo-Victorian novel written in pseudo-Victorian language (and touted as the work of "a graduate of Oxford" who "has spent the last twelve years scrupulously researching period detail"), it doesn't miss a trick: suppressed wills with purloined codicils, missing babies of doubtful birth, estates lost to gambling and high living, gentlewomen fallen on hard times, young boys caught up in a gang of thieves, wicked governesses, mistreated governesses, evil seducers, madness, betrayal, murder, and heroism, narrated from the point of view of a young man who is the victim of family secrets, one of which is that he is heir to a fortune contested in Chancery. Contrivance and coincidence are the key features of the abundant plot, and not in some arty, self-conscious way but solely for convenience. Such sentimental conventions of Victorian fiction as villains and saintly good souls are for the most part slighted; almost every character is cold and self-seeking. And yet, though the ending is hardly worth the work of getting to it, to read the first pages is to be trapped for seven hundred-odd more: you cannot stop turning them.

Three Paths to the Lake, by Ingeborg Bachmann, translated from the German by Mary Fran Gilbert (Holmes & Meier; $29.95). In these five stories, elliptical yet complete, which the Austrian poet (1926-73) collected in 1972, the present is some two decades ago. Time, however, slips backward in the characters' minds—to the previous week, to 1968, to 1938, to 1914—the way language, in their speech and thoughts, slips sidewise, into French, Italian, and English, as well as German in several accents. The five main characters are women: one is an interpreter, one a photographer; one is poor but luxury-loving, another adamantly nearsighted; one is the neglected, fearful elderly parent of a famous psychologist, whose coolly clinical works on camp survivors' paranoia she cannot understand, or even read. Bachmann writes in a Cubist prose of sudden cutoffs and reconnections that is acute and moving. She manages to convey that her women are playing out the Europe of their time and of before their time. There is no nostalgia here; all these damaged and incorrigible people seem intent on a present or a future that is exact or harmonious or clean in a way they have yet to see.

GENERAL

What Kind of Life, by Daniel Callahan (Simon & Schuster; $19.95). The author, a specialist in medical ethics, first broached his radical views on the limits that society should impose on medical care in a book called "Setting Limits." Here he broadens his argument. It is ruinous, he says, to promote a health-care plan that seeks to conquer all disease, and prolong the lives of the aged by technological wizardry, at the expense of social needs of more importance to the quality of life—housing, for example, and education. He would challenge the ideal of medical progress, because its very nature is to "pull to itself many more resources than should rationally be spent on it." We have our priorities twisted, he believes; the emphasis in an enlightened health-care system should be on caring, rather than curing, on preventive medicine, on intensified care of the young. This book will not be welcome to some entrenched interests, but it has the ring of common sense and realism.

The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian, by Nirad C. Chaudhuri (Addison-Wesley; $16.95, paper). The first volume of Chaudhuri's autobiography, originally published in England, in 1951. (The second, "Thy Hand, Great Anarch!," appeared in this country in 1988.) Like its successor, this book is artful, enchanting, and occasionally argumentative. Chaudhuri, who was born in a small town in East Bengal in 1897, begins by describing that town and the native villages of his parents, which he visited. His simple, stylish prose brings us the sights, sounds, and scents of the Bengali countryside and the ways of life of Hindus and Muslims, peasants and landowners, and professional men like his father, a lawyer. His account of the cycles of seasons; of children's games; of pets; of school; of religious myths; and of family legends re-creates not only the life of one Indian boy but the civilization around him. Chaudhuri went to college in Calcutta, and his portrait of that city and its inhabitants is astringent. His narrative concludes in 1921, when, though a dedicated student and a would-be historian, he was unable to pass the examination for his master's degree.

Century's End: A Cultural History of the Fin de Siècle from the 990s Through the 1990s, by Hillel Schwartz (Doubleday; $22.95). As the second millennium after Christ draws to a close, the author looks back to see how humanity has approached the endings and beginnings of earlier eras. He finds that our obsession with time and its measurement, with clocks and calendars, arrived late in history—that it was unknown to and unneeded by other civilizations. (The Romans seem to have been particularly sloppy about calculating anniversaries.) Mr. Schwartz's study is a beguiling and slightly disorienting intellectual stunt, crammed with surprises and recognitions. While the author is tolerant of the apocalyptic anxieties and utopian fantasies that have recurred toward the end of modern centuries, he makes certain that we bear in mind that our calendar is only one among many, and that all calendars are artifices.

The Hone & Strong Diaries of Old Manhattan, edited by Louis Auchincloss (Abbeville; $35). Meticulously illustrated with prints and engravings of the period, these selections from the diaries of two prominent nineteenth-century New Yorkers combine to paint an unusually detailed picture of city life from 1830 to 1875. Both Philip Hone and George Templeton Strong were active in political affairs, and throughout these pages are meetings with remarkable men: Daniel Webster, in his "blue satin vest"; the eighteen-year-old future King Edward VII; and President Lincoln, whom Strong came to admire, though he thought the President "lank and hard-featured" and wished he told "fewer dirty stories." Also vividly present are catastrophes: the great fire of 1835, which destroyed some six hundred buildings below Wall Street; shipwrecks; cholera epidemics; and violent mob confrontations. The narrative thread that takes us from Hone's visit with the last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence, in 1830, to Strong's comments on the death of Robert E. Lee, in 1870, is extraordinarily compelling.

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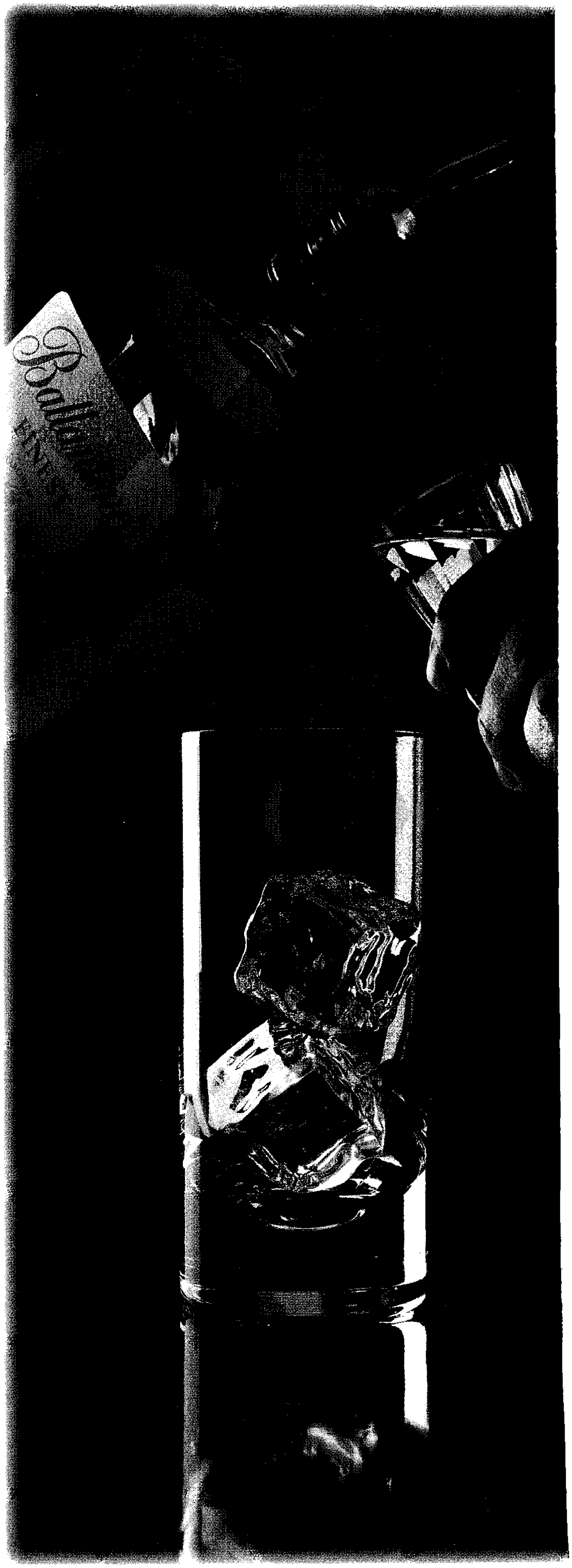

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"Only if you like your Scotch to be smooth."

You take a sip.

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You do and it does.

"That's peat. From the Scottish islands. See, with blended Scotch, the single malts are married ogether to enhance each other. But you can still aste the individual flavors."

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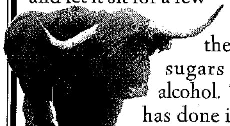
Some people are cut out to run a distillery. Some aren't.

Third, you need barley. Barley is one of those grains that thrives where you might think only rocks would grow. Which is why it does so well in Scotland. You malt your barley by soaking it in water, then drying it over the peaty fire. Then you grind it, mix in hot water and let it sit for a few hours. Add a little yeast to the liquid and the sugars turn into alcohol. The barley has done its job. You can feed it to cattle.



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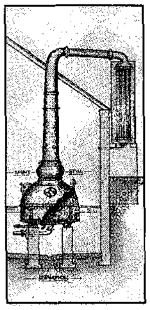
Fourth, you need cattle. Some of the happiest cattle in the world live in Scotland. (Not to mention some of the best tasting.)

Fifth, you need a still. These are the funny looking copper pots without which there would be no Scotch. It is said that Aristotle invented distillation. But sadly, he never lived to taste a fine Scotch like Ballantine's. After distillation, you have whisky. Which longs for barrels in which to grow old.



Save your pennies for a copper still.

Sixth, you need barrels. There aren't many oak trees left in Scotland. At least not enough to age Ballantine's Finest. So you need oak barrels imported from America. Once your Scotch is in the barrels, you need to put them away for a long time.

Seventh, it helps to have an ocean. There's a refreshing scent of sea air in a select few of the single malts used in Ballantine's. Some say it creeps into barrels stored near the ocean. In any case, it adds distinction to the Scotch. It may be that Scotland is the best place to make Scotch precisely because there's no point more than 70 miles from the sea. Kansas is not a good place to make Scotch.

Kansas. Too far from the North Sea.

And last, you'll need patience. The only thing left to do is wait. If you want your Scotch to be part of Ballantine's Finest, you'll have to wait quite a while, because we don't blend any malt whisky younger than five years. Patience is essential when starting your own distillery. But, as you've read this far, it would seem that you have a good supply of it.

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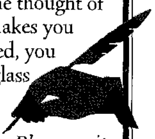
Whew! If the thought of all this work makes you feel a bit tattered, you might enjoy a glass of Ballantine's Finest. Maybe you don't need your own distillery after all.



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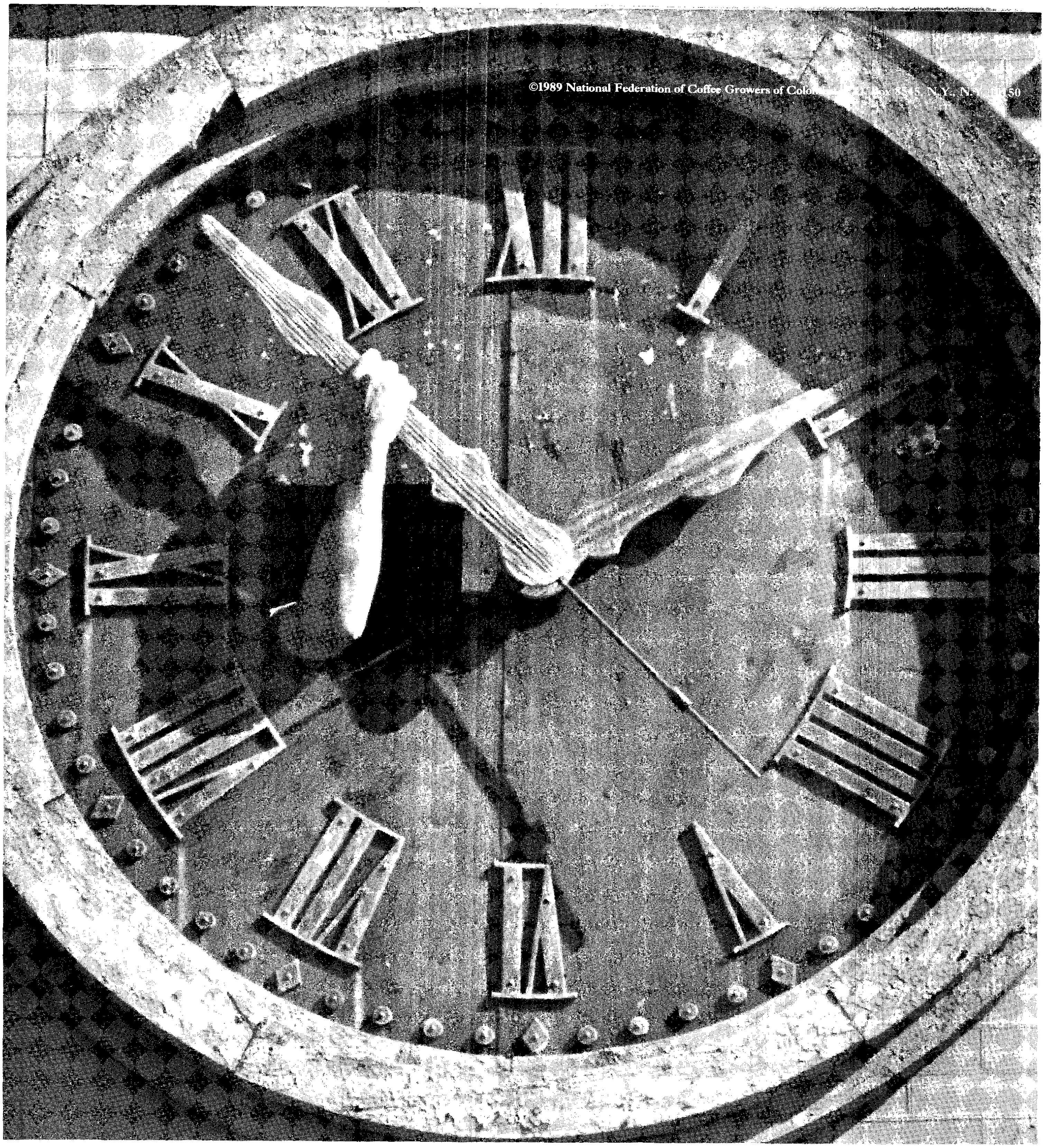

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